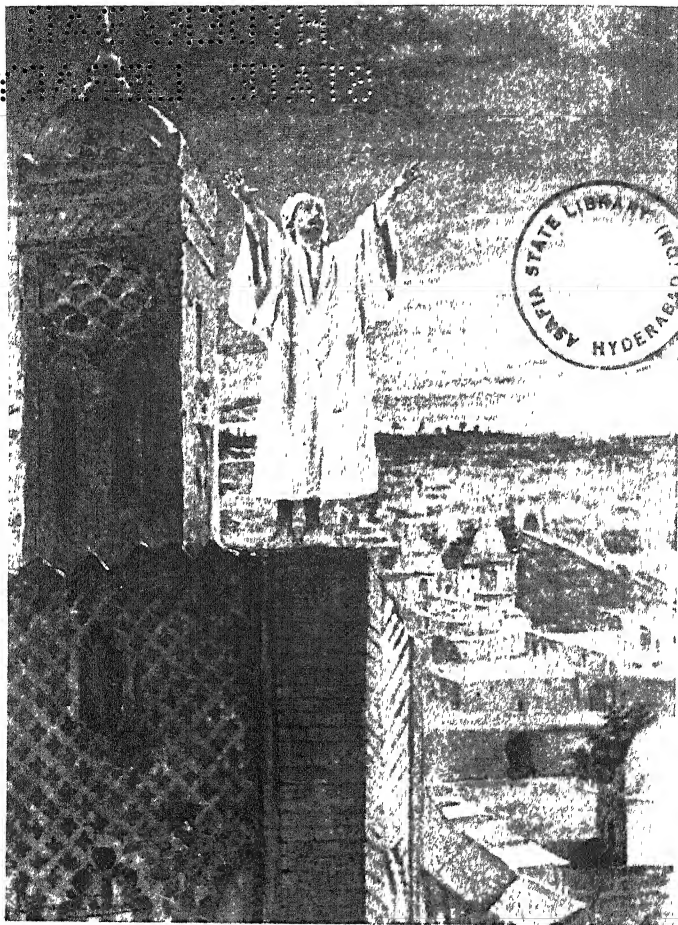


WITH MULAI HAFID AT FEZ



THE CALL TO PRAYER.

WITH MULAI HAFID AT FEZ

BEHIND THE SCENES IN MOROCCO

BY
LAWRENCE HARRIS, F.R.G.S.

WITH A FRONTISPIECE IN COLOUR
AND THIRTY-EIGHT ILLUSTRATIONS

LONDON
SMITH, ELDER & CO., 15, WATERLOO PLACE
1909

All rights reserved

PRINTED BY
WILLIAM CLOWES AND SONS, LIMITED,
LONDON AND BECCLES.

INTRODUCTION

How pleasing to the eye is a brilliantly coloured picture of an Oriental scene! With its white minarets glistening in the sun, piercing the azure blue with its prettily tinted figures in the shady street and the colours so cleverly arranged by the loving hand of the artist. You revel in the beauty of colour. How dull is town life, with its drab conventionalities, compared with this ideal sunlit scene! But close proximity with the real place disillusion even the enthusiast. The beautiful blue sky is but a canopy over indescribable filth and sordidness, which the scorching sun festers into disease of every kind. The poet and the artist but idealize their subject and all discordant notes are omitted. So have I found that most books that have been written about Morocco are full of misplaced sympathies and poetical sentimentalism. The Mogreb or Land of Morocco is the most glaring example in the

world of a country of degenerate mankind. Its gloomy plains, denuded table-lands, immense wastes, and crumbling cities populated by a race in whom exists not a spark of the finer instincts of humanity, bring this forcibly home to a European traveller.

The brutal Arab is opposed to the cunning Moor, who is again terrorized by the violent Berber. They are all fleeced by the oppressed Jew, and these, with a few renegades—the scum of Europe, having a compound of all the vices—make up the population of this benighted country. European traders in the coast towns are tainted by close contact with this vicious life.

Morocco is a land of corruption, tyranny, and unscrupulous oppression, and no country is so entirely beyond and outside the purview of European ideas and standards. Of literature there is none, music and learning exist only in a most elementary and barbaric state. The Mohammedan religion with its enervating doctrine of preordained future is fatal to progress. In Turkey and other Mohammedan countries, close contact with Europeans has resulted in agitation for reform, but the policy of the Moorish Sultans in excluding all strangers from the interior of

Morocco has had the effect of completely isolating the country from all reform. The innumerable traditions and fables with which their religion is augmented and polluted has enhanced the fanatical hatred to all Europeans or European innovations.

The administration of the country is corrupt in every detail. Its courts are veritable sinks of chicanery, and the Makhzen but a crowd of sycophants and parasites. The whole population is in a state of physical decay, and only by intermarrying with the black slaves from Timbuctoo and thus infusing fresh blood into the race has it been saved from complete annihilation by a loathsome disease. So is this country of Morocco, within two hours of Europe, with its splendid sea-board, beautiful climate, and rich soil, allowed to remain stagnant. The fine coast is without harbours, the soil is but scratched in parts, vast areas remain untilled, and the Sultan of this degenerate race is permitted impudently to impose conditions upon Great European Powers and flout their representatives. When we read of exploration in such dangerous and difficult countries as Tibet, it seems incredible that Sus in the South of Morocco has never been explored,

and is practically the only blank spot on the map of Africa. It is to be hoped that the squabble between the European Powers will soon end and the impudence of this puny people be checked.

The exceptional advantage I enjoyed at the Court of Mulai Hafid enabled me to get a closer insight into the life and customs of this people than is usually accorded to strangers, and I have endeavoured in this book to convey to the reader an idea of the country and its institutions by a series of sketches rather than a wearisome category of facts and figures.

LAWRENCE HARRIS.

October, 1909.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

FROM LONDON TO LARAICHE

	PAGES
Terse instructions from my chiefs—Arrival at Tangier— Custom-house chicanery—The “Muezzin”—Legation officialdom—Ominous reports of the state of the country —Meet Hardwick—Heads shaved—Evade official ob- structions and escape from Tangier—Cross the notorious “Akbar Hamara” mountains—Remains of village sacked by Azizites—Opposite Laraiche—Its memories of slavery and torture	1-20

CHAPTER II

THE JOURNEY TO FEZ

El Hadj's disdainful description of the town—We camp outside the walls—Scarecrow guards—Commencement of “Ramadam”—Torture hooks—Over “The Field of the Three Kings' Fight”—El Hadj and the headman— Jer Raafi and its Roman remains—Uncomfortable travelling—Village dogs—Insolent guards at Shemacha —Despair of reaching Fez—Bathing—An audience of children discuss the white-skinned infidels—El Hadj tells his story—“Broose”—Reach Fez at last	21-48
--	-------

CHAPTER III

CIVIL WAR IN MOROCCO

Abdallah ben Mokta—He tells of the civil war in Morocco— The Glow of the Atlas—"King-maker"—Si Aziz and his account of Casa-Blanca—Carnage in Casa- Blanca—Awful fate of a Spanish family—Wholesale shooting—Moorish terror of French troops	PAGES 49-66
--	----------------

CHAPTER IV

THE SULTANS OF MOROCCO

Principle of Moroccan sovereignty—Origin of Shereefian dynasties—The Sultans and their European slaves— Mulai Hassan—His Grand Vizier—Lalla Reqia, the lovely slave and the mother of Abdul Aziz—The dis- grace of Mulai Mohammed—Adbul Aziz ascends the throne—The lions at Mazagan—Weakness and down- fall—Mulai Hafid as governor of Marrakesh—His penury forces him to eke out his scanty income by engaging in commerce—Sells his brother's armoury to his own partisans—Marries daughters of influential Kaidas—Hafid proclaimed Sultan—Battle of Settat— Seizes Palace and its treasures at Fez	67-82
---	-------

CHAPTER V

FIRST INTERVIEW WITH MULAI HAFID

Visit of the "Harabas"—The "Makheznia"—Mulai Hafid —Asks me to draw his portrait—His eagerness for news —His antipathy to the French—His pro-English tendencies—He appoints me his special correspondent and confirms it by "firman"—Treasure house of the Palace—Sultan provides house—Sanitary conditions of the city	83-98
---	-------

CHAPTER VI

HAFID'S HAZARDOUS EXPERIMENT

PAGES

Hadj Tahar Mokwar—Taking the photograph of the Sultan at a religious ceremony in the Palace—Dangerous attitude assumed by the crowd—Mulai Hafid anxious for England's help—Pertinent questions *re* Germany—Mulai Hafid shows me over the Palace—The Royal menagerie—Tiger and the sheep—The "Hajib" explains the interior of the Palace—Dr. Vassel—Ben Gebritt . 99-115

CHAPTER VII

FEZ

Saints by the roadway—Panorama of the city—Sketching dangerous—Hills of cement—Pious foundations—Murder of Europeans—University of Karaouiyn—Students' life—Sultan of the Tolba 116-131

CHAPTER VIII

HAFID'S CRUEL PUNISHMENTS

El Hadj's story of Mohammed—Burning of the village—His adoption—Meets the ill-fated Mulai Mohammed—His faithfulness to his Prince causes his downfall—Mulai Mohammed—"The one-cyed"—Brought to Fez in chains—Fearful punishment of the Sheik of the Zowia 132-146

CHAPTER IX

THE MAKHZEN

The rise of the Makhzen—Turkish influence—Creation of a standing army—Power of the Makhzen—Ignorance of the Ministers—Abdallah-el-Fasi, Foreign Minister—Sultan's desire that I should start a newspaper in Fez . 147-159

CHAPTER X

DINNER WITH A CABINET MINISTER

PAGES

Environs of Fez—Cruel punishments for false weights— Reception—Raisuli makes the tea—A Moor's impressions of England—Mystification by card-tricks—A shot in the dark	160-172
---	---------

CHAPTER XI

SOCIETY AND FAMILY

The Fasis—Family life—Child-bride of fourteen—Feminine life—Superstition and worship of "Marabouts"— Marriage ceremony—Slavery—An incident of the slave- market—The position and privileges of the Shereefian families—Doctors—Absolem buys me a love-charm .	173-189
---	---------

CHAPTER XII

JEWS OF MOROCCO

Position and distribution of the Jews in Morocco—Social position—Dress and language—Miserable conditions— Tenacity to their religious worship—Family life— "Mellahs"—Jewish legends—School of the "Alliance Israélite"	190-203
--	---------

CHAPTER XIII

IMPORTANT INTERVIEW WITH MULAI HAFID

The sacred shadow of the cannon—The army—Mulai Hafid's curious conversation—Seeks my advice—In the Seraglio —Eunuch conducts me through underground passages —Absolem's terror of the Sultan—Show Hafid the <i>Graphic</i> with his portrait—Difficulties to explain advertisements—Meet portion of Hafid's harem .	204-221
--	---------

CONTENTS

xiii

CHAPTER XIV

MY DEPARTURE FROM FEZ

	PAGES
Jealousy of officials—Ben Sliman poisoned—I am cowardly assaulted—Aid-el-Kebir—Difficulty to obtain animals—No ammunition—Attack expected on the road—Change my route and go over the mountains—The meeting with the brigands—The “Sebou”—Surrounded by fanatics—Miss ford at river—Animal washed away—Miserable condition of party	222-243

CHAPTER XV

JOURNEY TO TANGIER

. Mohammed loses the track—Fight at the village—The Shereef of Wazzan and his English wife—Alkazar—“Bibi” Carlton—Through dangerous country—A gruesome meeting—At a village with Raisuli’s men—I doctor the natives—Night-riders—Meet with Bou Hamara, the Pretender—Tangier	244-266
--	---------

APPENDIX	267-270
--------------------	---------

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	FACING PAGE
THE CALL TO PRAYER	<i>Frontispiece</i>
THE AUTHOR	8
FEZ	16
LINE OF ROMAN FORTS	} 28
FORDING A RIVER	
FIRST GLIMPSE OF FEZ	
THE FATE OF A FAITHFUL SERVANT	} 30
SACRED STORK IN MY GARDEN AT FEZ	
EL HADJ (from an oil painting by the Author)	32
ON THE COAST OF MOROCCO: EMBARKING LIVE SHEEP	} 54
SAFFI	
THE SULTAN'S BLESSING	} 68
THE GRAND VIZIER AND HIS STAFF	
MULAI HAFID	86
ROYAL VISIT TO THE MOSQUE	100
THE MENAGERIE IN THE PALACE AT FEZ	} 108
CORNER OF A ROOM IN THE PALACE	
THE SULTAN MULAI HAFID, AND HIS FLY-CATCHERS	110

	FACING PAGE
BEN GEBRITT	112
THE SACRED BANNERS AT FEZ	138
SI ABDALLAH EL-FASI (FOREIGN MINISTER) AND HIS SECRETARY AND CHIEF MESSENGER	144
A VILLAGE OF THE ZOWIA	162
PUNISHMENT OF SHEIK MOHAMMED ABDUL LOWI	164
PUNISHMENT FOR GIVING FALSE WEIGHT	176
A MOORISH DINNER PARTY	184
MOORISH WOMAN, VEILED	190
MOORISH WOMAN, UNVEILED	194
"SAINT HOUSE" OUTSIDE FEZ	204
THE SLAVE MARKET	232
ATLAS JEWS	264
COUNTRY WOMEN (ATLAS)	234
JEWISH BRIDE. ON THE EVE OF MARRIAGE THE YOUNG LADY HAS TO SIT WITH HER EYES CLOSED	264
GRAVE OF ZULIKA HACHUAL, THE GIRL MARTYR	232
A STREET IN MOGADOR	264
A DEPUTATION OF TRIBESMEN	232
MR. "BIBI" CARLTON	264
L'ARBI AND ABSOLEM	234
THE SHEEP FEAST	264
HEADS ON THE GATE	264

WITH MULAI HAFID AT FEZ

CHAPTER I

FROM LONDON TO LARAICHE

Terse instructions from my chiefs—Arrival at Tangier—Custom-house chicanery—The “ Muezzin ”—Legation officialdom—Ominous reports of the state of the country—Meet Hardwick—Heads shaved—Evade official obstructions and escape from Tangier—Cross the notorious “ Akbar Hamara ” mountains—Remains of village sacked by Azizites—Opposite Laraiche—Its memories of slavery and torture.

ON September 11, 1908, I started from London with orders to interview and sketch Mulai Hafid, the new Sultan of Morocco.

My instructions were concise. They may be summed up as follows. “ If through some untoward circumstances you meet with personal inconvenience in the shape of brigands, bullets, or the slower but equally deadly ministrations of an Oriental cook, you are so to arrange that your dispatches do not fail to reach London without delay—your remains may follow at leisure.”

I had no idea where the Sultan was, and in order to obtain some slight help in my undertaking, I applied to the Foreign Office for some form of safeguard and help from the English officials in Morocco. I was unfortunate in my first quest. Most courteously I was informed that my intended project met with their entire disapproval, and they advised me not to attempt any such thing. The loss of their powerful influence was the cause of all my subsequent inconvenience and trouble during my journey.

The political situation in Morocco at this moment was not reassuring. A short time previously, some Europeans had been barbarously murdered and mutilated at Casa-Blanca. This town had been bombarded, and was now occupied by French troops. Abdul Aziz, the Sultan, had been deposed, and was a fugitive under the protection of the French; Mulai Hafid, his brother, had seized the throne; Bou Hamara, the Pretender, was on the alert, and the whole country in a state of anarchy and rebellion. The cause of all the trouble was the European tendencies of Abdul Aziz and the fanatical outcry against the modern or infidel innovations which he was introducing. France was endeavouring

to obtain a foothold in the country, Germany was jealously irritated, and England held aloof—watching events. How it will all end, A'llah only knows!

After a two hours' journey from Gibraltar, we anchored just off Tangier. Our little boat, the *Gibel Dersa*, commanded by my old friend Captain Watkins, swayed from side to side, as the huge Atlantic rollers passed us on their way to the golden sands at the foot of the white city sparkling in the bright sunlight. Three or four European warships, anchored in the roadstead, were an ominous sign of the troubled state of the country.

A clumsy barge-like lighter, filled with wildly vociferating natives, wallowed along in the trough of the sea, on its way to fetch me ashore. Soon the deck was filled by these ragged rascals, who fight and screech for possession of my baggage and body. I am rescued by Watkins, and at last am safely seated in the boat and rowed to the rickety landing stage. At this place a free fight ensues amongst loungers for my patronage; the victors proudly shoulder my luggage and march me to the Customs.

In a crazy shed, squatting on a straw mat,

are four venerable long-bearded officials. Pious sons of Mahomet are these, who, while counting their beads, are not deterred from discussing other matters between the muttered "A'llah il A'llahs" as they go through the cycle of their rosary. Piles of merchandise, a few open boxes and quantities of stuffs and materials scattered about on the dirty floor, await their attention. But why should a true believer hurry for an infidel? For weeks, or even months, goods must wait at the customs till A'llah doth please to bring their minds to bear upon your case. Wildly gesticulating merchants cannot disturb their serenity. With a smile they are answered with the terrible word "In'shallah !" ("If it please God"). No matter what the subject may be, all argument and discussion is finished by that conclusive word. Unfortunate is the creditor who, pressing for payment, is answered by the inevitable—"I will pay you—In'shallah !" Sadly he must wait till the debtor considers it has pleased God that he should pay up. That "In'shallah" is symbolic of their doctrine of preordained future, which is fatal to all enterprise and progress. The apathetic deferring of all matters to an indefinite period is the cause

of decay in every Mohammedan country and especially in Morocco.

There is no regular tariff at the Customs in Morocco, and the duty is assessed in proportion to the bribe previously administered. Visitors are often mulcted in a most shameless fashion. On one occasion I had but a small bag and my sketching-easel. These were passed, but, no other baggage following, the easel was brought back. "What is this strange thing you bring in our country?" It was duly explained by me. "By A'llah! We know not what it is, nor do we understand you—but pay two dollars and go your way;" and they muttered the proverb—"It is well that the Christians pay, while we smile. Bis-millah." With my previous experiences in mind I sidled up to the nearest old gentleman and surreptitiously slipped four dollars in his hand, intimating that a receipt was not necessary. Thus I escaped delay and augmented the private income of two of the customs officers. I say two, because one other had seen me give the money and would receive a portion of it.

By the advice of Watkins I had hung my revolvers inside my trousers, for on no account would they have been passed by the customs.

These caused me some difficulty in walking, but as I was a N'zerani and an infidel, my peculiar gait was attributed to the excessive drinking of strong waters. Diminutive donkeys, loaded with my boxes, bent and stumbled up the hilly streets to a quiet hotel, where I quickly relieved myself of my uncomfortable burden. I had intentionally chosen this quiet place, to avoid the news-mongers and gossips that loaf around the larger hotels, where your every movement is watched and reported. The food was not of the best, but the view from my bedroom window compensated for much.

At early dawn a sunbeam came through the half-closed shutters, crawled along the walls as a bar of gold till it reached my face, to shame me as a sluggard. I pushed back the shutters, and the semi-darkened room was flooded with light. Before me lay the broad expanse of pure blue sky; on the distant horizon the coasts of Spain, a long purple line; while the white sails of tiny boats sparkled in the sun-kissed water rippling in the gentle breeze. Tangier stretches away to the sea in an endless number of snow-white terraces. A network of dark intersecting lines indicates the streets and by-ways. Walls of

mosques, covered with green tiles, sparkle in some places like emeralds, and there, on the topmost summit of the hill, standing in spectral whiteness, the ramparts of the fortress cut a vigorous outline against the blue sky.

The streets are buzzing with the early movement of life. Camels gurgle, asses bray, and the jabber of the countrymen but just arrived within the city with their grain, tell of a new day commenced. Suddenly on the crisp morning air, a long-drawn cry soars over the city. The Muezzin has appeared on the balcony of the principal mosque, hoisted the white flag, proclaiming with the morning devotions the faith of Islam, and calling the faithful to prayer. From mosque to mosque the plaintive cry is taken up and floats over the city.

A silence falls. All true believers are on their knees, facing the East, and reverently repeating the creed of the Tholba. The last accents fade away in a final slow and plaintive note—profoundly sad—A'llah Akbar—("God is great").

Away up on the hills outside the town is the British Legation, and there I had to go to present my credentials. From the cool and quiet courtyard of the hotel, into the narrow crowded

streets, through the Soko Chico, up the main street, past the guarded gates, into the big market-place. Well-dressed men of all nationalities stood in groups outside the cafés and lazily discussed the latest scandal. Ragged Spanish boys rushed about with European newspapers, three days old. Camels squatted on the ground, eternally gurgling in a most vicious manner; small donkeys, with loads much bigger than themselves, pushed their way amongst the crowd in all directions; mules tethered to posts gave sly kicks whenever they saw a chance; here and there, one noticed a European horseman on his way to business; yelling vendors of carpets and curios thrust their wares into one's face; loathsome beggars clutched my arm to whine and show me their repulsive deformities—and so I struggle up the hilly street, stumbling in the muddy ruts that a scorching sun was fast drying into an unwholesome dust.

At the Legation the British Consul General informed me that on no account must I think of going to Fez. He advanced many cogent arguments against it—tales of massacre, rapine, and slaughter. How a Spanish doctor has been brutally murdered, etc., etc. In fact it was an



THE AUTHOR.

utter impossibility for any European to travel in the interior. "In any case," resumed the Consul, "you would have to go to the Basha of Tangier to provide you with an escort, and I am sure he will refuse, as the country is most unsafe for Europeans." Here was a dilemma.

I left the Legation offices and went to Menehbi, the representative of Mulai Hafid at Tangier. He was more reassuring. "You may go, and I will give you a letter to the Sultan; get your animals ready and come to me in a day or so." But this was but Oriental bluff, as I found to my cost. No letter was forthcoming, and I could see Menehbi no more. Seeing matters take so serious a turn I changed my plans. Secretly I set to work. As no native guide would travel without an escort it was desirable to find a travelling companion, take all the risks, and defy the authorities. I put no faith in the exaggerated reports about the dangerous state of the country.

Tangier is a hotbed of social twaddle and the cesspool of European scum. News in Morocco travels like a snowball rolling down a slope, its bulk is increased in proportion to the distance travelled and by the foreign matter it picks up

en route. So a rumour from the interior gathers other stray rumours on its way, and finally arrives as a heterogeneous mass of distorted half-truths. It is then seized upon by "our local correspondent" (every one in Tangier enjoys that proud position) and transmitted by cable for the edification of the European Press and the emolument of the aforesaid "local correspondent."

Now, in the hotel there sat opposite me at table a quiet, mild-looking, blue-eyed Englishman. Amongst the cosmopolitan crowd who thronged the dining-room he was specially noticeable, for he seldom spoke to any one. During the first three days, beyond a brief "Good morning," we exchanged but few words. I gathered, however, that he intended going to Fez. I at once made direct inquiries in the right quarter and found that my *vis-à-vis*, for all his lamb-like appearance, was just such a man as I should wish to accompany me. An ex-member of the South African Police, he had seen service in the native wars in Rhodesia. As a big-game hunter and trader in ivory he had written a successful book on sport and travel in East Africa. He was, in fact, a wanderer of many years' experience

in most of the wilder parts of Africa. I approached him with a view to his accompanying me on my trip to Fez. He agreed at once. Thus began my acquaintance with Mr. A. Arkell-Hardwick. His knowledge of transport and camp equipment was invaluable. A good rider and an excellent shot, he proved throughout the expedition an ideal travelling-companion. This matter being thus agreeably disposed of, I left him to procure the necessary impedimenta for our journey. I could now stroll around Tangier, put in an appearance here and there, talk vaguely of my forthcoming trip to Casa-Blanca, and so keep up the appearance of having abandoned the trip to Fez.

At night time, Hardwick brought to my room at the hotel a truculent-looking rogue named Mohammed Rabet. He had been to Fez and produced the usual sheaf of testimonials from former alleged satisfied patrons. His English as well as his manners led me to believe that his former tourist patrons had treated him with greater freedom than is politic with men of his breed. "Hallo! old cock," he observed, in a matter-of-fact tone, as he entered the room and appropriated the only other chair. His air of

pained surprise when ordered to stand up and exhibit more restraint both in speech and manner in my presence was almost ludicrous.

Questioned as to the possibility of leaving Tangier for Fez in forty-eight hours, he gave me to understand that he approved of me, he approved of the expedition, and if I would leave the whole matter in his hands he would "see me through, in less than no time." As a preliminary, would I disburse a small advance on account of his salary? Also a little on account of the expenses he would be compelled to incur while slaving in my service. The next morning he brought me his friend, Mohammed Moktar, the muleteer. After much swearing by A'llah, he agreed to a price for the animals, but I must give a substantial deposit. Hardwick had secured tents and camp equipment, and everything was ready for our departure on the following morning. Late the same afternoon the ubiquitous Rabet appeared and declared that we should all be murdered if we did not take a soldier. He would not venture without one. On a promise of more money, he agreed to risk it, if we would consent to go disguised as Moors. While he went to buy the necessary dresses, Hardwick and I

visited the nearest barber's and had our heads shaved and beards trimmed in Moorish fashion. We looked hideous, and slunk back to the hotel and took refuge in my bedroom. Later, Rabet brought the clothes, which we donned. We were to start at three in the morning to escape prying eyes. But the next day neither Rabet nor Moktar appeared. The sun rose, and it was impossible to think of starting even if they did arrive, for we should be observed. I learnt afterwards that official pressure had been applied to intimidate Rabet, and he had run away. With an expenditure of another few pounds I quickly procured another muleteer, El Hadj. He spoke English and French, having travelled through Europe as an acrobat. He was full of anecdote, and his reminiscences beguiled many tedious hours during the march to Fez. We got away early next morning quite secretly. Later I heard that the day after my departure a message came from the Legation inquiring if it were true that I had left for Fez. Despite their kind solicitude for my welfare, I had eluded them.

There was a long march before me, as I proposed to camp at Ber Rihan, a large village half-way to Laraiche. During the morning I

passed one of Mulai Hafid's mahallas encamped, watching Tangier. After crossing a small river, a halt was made for lunch. A few yards away, under a dilapidated blanket stretched over a pole, sat an itinerant vendor of tea and coffee, which he brewed over a small charcoal fire. A sample of the coffee proved it to be a muddy concoction that was only acceptable after a long and tedious ride.

The meal finished, the caravan pushed on southwards towards the Akbar Hamara, a range of mountains, the stronghold of numerous robber bands. In three hours the foot of the pass was reached. The ascent was rugged and steep in the extreme. Huge boulders were scattered plentifully over the track. Painfully the heavily laden mules toiled to the summit. There we were confronted by armed men, who demanded toll. Ragged ruffians they looked, but it appears they were placed there by the authorities as guards to the pass. Their only remuneration depended upon the amount they could extort from passing caravans. The track then wound round huge lichen-covered boulders, down thorn-covered slopes, and across dry beds of mountain torrents. To the left towered the higher peaks of the Akbar

Hamara, which later in the year are covered with snow. On the right the range descended precipitously to an extensive valley, through which, in snakelike curves, wound the river. Beyond, the vast bosom of the Atlantic glittered in the rays of the declining sun. We were delayed some two hours on the banks of the tidal river which flows into the sea near Arzila. A water-melon, procured surreptitiously by El Hadj, was most acceptable, parched as we were with a long ride in the scorching sun. It helped to console us while waiting for the tide to recede sufficiently to render the ford practicable. With water well over our knees, we stumbled across the stony bed of the river, and arrived, two hours later, at Ben Rihan, wet and miserable. Here we pitched our tents, after having had our bare legs scratched and torn in riding through the hedges of prickly pear, which, guarding the various dwellings, led to an open space in the centre of the village. Fodder for the animals, some eggs and a scraggy chicken or two were purchased from the villagers. The guards arranged for, I was at liberty to retire into my tent, free from the groups of inquisitive natives and the yelping and snapping of the village dogs.

It is the custom in Morocco for the villages to furnish guards for one's camp. They are paid a small fee, which guarantees the traveller from petty thefts from the villagers themselves. At 4 a.m. next morning tents were struck, and soon we were on the march. The route lay over undulating country covered with patches of Palmetto scrub. In the early morning we approached a blackened ruin, which had lately been a prosperous village. A few scorched and twisted poles marked the site of the houses. Poor shot-riddled remnants of trees still flung their gaunt and shattered branches to the breeze. Not a sign of life anywhere. Little whirlwinds stirred up the ashes, and scattered them over the deserted hillside, scarred with lines of trenches.

"Behold!" said El Hadj, "how poor people suffer, when the Sultan quarrels." It appears that this village was Hafidist, and the troops of Abdul Aziz had paid it a visit. In a little glade with a stream of fresh water bubbling through it, we stopped for lunch. Innumerable tortoises disported themselves in the brook, snapping and scrambling in their unwieldy endeavours to catch the crumbs we threw to them. It is most



FEZ.

essential to halt where there is water when travelling in the interior of Morocco.

After many weary hours' march, our animals stumbling and slipping in the loose sandhills, we arrived opposite Laraiche. Groups of Arabs were squatting beside their heavily-laden animals, waiting with leaden patience for the turning of the tide, in order to cross the mouth of the river that divided them and us from the city. We, perforce, had to follow their example. El Hadj collected the straying animals and hobbled them into a group, herding them together some distance from the prying eyes, and possibly thieving fingers, of his vicious-looking countrymen. He next dug a hole in the sand, for me to rest my weary bones, and left me to get a little repose and ease my aching limbs, afterwards going to the water's edge to shriek out his wants to the sleepy guardians of the port on the other side of the stream.

The waning sun in the west was slowly sinking in the hazy distance of the ocean, and soon hid its beaming face behind the distant waste of waters, leaving all in darkness. The golden tints from the disappearing orb faded away as the yellow ball dipped below the horizon, and

anxious travellers sought the protection of the walls of the city before they were caught by the darkness. In answer to El Hadj's repeated shriekings of a strong vocabulary of appeals and threats, a large unwieldy lighter, worked by one man, set out from the other bank and painfully struggled to cross the narrow neck of water. The great Atlantic rollers left a small, tossing steamer out in the "large" to rush on and dash themselves into walls of foam at the bar, then to struggle through the narrow causeway in a thousand eddies and currents, finally to settle down in miniature waves to play and mock round the sides of the wrecks, whose battered ribs stick out in silent testimony to the might of the terrible, tumultuous bar which rears and moans a few hundred yards away.

With the hood of my d'jellaba pulled well over my head to escape the prying eyes of the half-naked countrywomen, I lay in the shifting sand and gazed across the river. This dirty town of Laraiche, high up on the hill, with its crumbling walls and houses topped with innumerable Consuls' flags, was once the stronghold of those inhuman Moorish pirates who were the terror of the shipping of the coasts of Italy,

Spain, and France, and even ventured to take their toll from the seatowns of England and Ireland. What terrible tales of torture could those grim walls tell of the fearful life of the Christian women captured from the merchant ships? How these unfortunate creatures, from the barred windows of their worse than prisons, saw their brothers and husbands who, with hollow cheeks and despair in their hearts, were being driven out, chained together, into the interior, to work as slaves till they dropped, and death mercifully came to rescue them from their miseries."

As I lay thus musing, the picture arose before me of a gallant ship setting sail from home with a good cargo and happy passengers ; of the crowds of friends waving farewells from the jetty ; a few days' peaceful voyage ; and then, the strange sail on the horizon and the quick passing round of the dreadful word, "Pirates !" the fight—the massacre—and the despair of the miserable captives when brought to this fearful country. To think that these things were possible in the eighteenth century when England was the supposed "Mistress of the seas" and the greatest nation of the world, seemed to me incredible. I gazed with loathing

at the frowning walls which stared me in the face and filled my mind with an awful horror at the heart-tearing and blood-curdling atrocities that they had witnessed and concealed.

I was brought back to my present surroundings by the raised voices of the boatmen and El Hadj, who were busily engaged in heaping abuse on each others' ancestors in a vain endeavour to come to terms for the hire of the boat. I settled the argument by paying half the price demanded, and we were ferried across the water to the Customs where the boatman revenged himself by declaring I was a N'zerani, with the result that I had to pay double, before the officials permitted me to land.

CHAPTER II

THE JOURNEY TO FEZ

El Hadj's disdainful description of the town—We camp outside the walls—Scarecrow guards—Commencement of "Ramadam"—Torture hooks—Over "The Field of the Three Kings' Fight"—El Hadj and the headman—Jer Raafi and its Roman remains—Uncomfortable travelling—Village dogs—Insolent guards at Shemacha—Despair of reaching Fez—Bathing—An audience of children discuss the white-skinned infidels—El Hadj tells his story—"Broose"—Reach Fez at last.

THE guardians of the port satisfied, the animals landed, and the baggage found to be quite safe, Hardwick, myself, and El Hadj went for a walk through the town, while Absolem took charge of our goods and pitched our camp outside the walls of Laraiche. El Hadj led us through the tortuous dirty streets and discoursed on the way. "By A'llah!" he swore, according to his custom, "this is a hole, a stable, it is no longer a city. Look at the Kasbah! it is in ruins. What is this for a mosque for a true believer? Bah! it is nothing. Here is the market. Pooh, it is only fit for Jews and dogs. What are the people

here? There are only about five thousand—one-half Riffians and the other half, Jews. Where are its Saints? They have only one. There, you see that white dome on the hills? That, Sidi, is the shrine of Lilla Mennana. She guards the people here from pestilence and famine. To her go all the barren women, who pray to her to make them fruitful. But I trust them not; there is more scandal than offspring begot by their praying, as they call it.” And thus, with sundry ejaculations and succinct descriptions of the people and the city of Laraiche, El Hadj led us through the dilapidated town, finally taking us out by the Kasbah Gate, where we found our camp all in readiness. The animals were tethered in a line in front of the tent, the kettle was merrily boiling over a charcoal fire, and over a cup of sweet, green tea, Hardwick and I looked through the door of our tent at the old ramparts built by the Portuguese when they were in possession of the place in years gone by.

Round about were skulking natives who eyed our camp with envy. A wary look-out was kept to guard our belongings from their thieving fingers. At sundown two woe-begotten specimens of Moorish humanity presented themselves at the door

of the tent, salaamed and said that they were the guard, and told me I must pay four dollars for their services. "Hi! El Hadj," I cried, "what do these two scarecrows want? Tell them to go away. We are well armed and require no guards. Besides, what is the good of those ragged old beggars?" But, to my surprise, El Hadj, with a grave face, said, "Nay, Sidi, these men are sent by the Basha and must be allowed to guard our tents for the night, for it is our law that strangers must be guarded. It is thus that the Basha maketh money. If you do not pay for the guards he arrangeth that some of your belongings will be stolen, and if you should complain to your Consul he will say that he cannot find your goods, or discover the thief. And though he hath your property in the next room and your animals in his stable, he will swear by the Koran that he knows nothing of them. He will also say that he sent guards to you, but that you refused their services." But, coming closer, he whispered, "Do not give them four dollars. I will arrange for a less sum than that. Leave the matter in my hands." Then, taking the two old reprobates aside, he carried on a most abusive argument, and eventually

settled the affair for two dollars and an empty cake-tin.

After a hot steaming dish of "cous-cous," Hardwick and I turned in, and were soon sleeping as only tired travellers can. It seemed that we had rested but a few minutes when we were suddenly awakened by a terrific noise. Shots were being fired in all directions, shrieks and shouting sounded from all sides, and every now and again the crazy old brass cannon, left by the Portuguese a hundred years ago, boomed out a sullen roar and lit up the place for an instant. Clutching our revolvers, Hardwick and I rushed out to find our servants and guards—all fast asleep. Even this noise was not sufficient to wake an Arab when once he is asleep. With a few well-directed kicks I awakened El Hadj, and asked what was the meaning of all the shrieking, shouting, and firing that could be heard going on in the town. "Is it a war? Are they murdering the Governor? Or are the Jews and Europeans being massacred? Eh, what is it?" With a sleepy yawn and a discontented grunt, El Hadj said, "The commencement of Ramadam!" and considering this reply quite sufficient and lucid an explanation, he turned over and went off to

sleep again. Back to our camp-beds we went, and as we lay there in the dark, I tried to explain to Hardwick that Ramadam is a great fast of the Mohammedans; and how from sunrise to sunset all true Mussulmans abstain from every particle of food and drink during a period of thirty days; and that the unearthly din we had heard, was their usual way of welcoming in the occasion. I also told him how the "Neffar" on the minarets of the mosque blows three trumpet-blasts at two o'clock in the morning and again before dawn; how the "Sahhar" and the "Deqqack" patrol the streets at two o'clock in the morning, the one striking a tambourine and the other knocking at the doors of the houses to awaken the people for the nocturnal repast with the words: "Ye that are the work of God's hands, arise in obedience to the Lord. Eat and drink that the wrath of God alight not upon us." And so I went on explaining the peculiar religious rites of the Moors, when a snore from my companion warned me that my eloquence was being wasted, for he was fast asleep. So I rolled over, and followed his example.

Early the next morning the camp was struck and we were on the Al-Kazar road. As we passed

by the gates of Laraiche, El Hadj pointed out to me some very curious hooks, high up on the walls. These, he explained, were used "in the good old times" for obstinate persons, who, not being influenced by the ordinary methods of persuasion, such as the bastinado, the thumb-screw, or red-hot irons, were thrown from the walls to be impaled on the said hooks. The shudder that passed through me was not altogether caused by the raw, cold morning air. After we left the town we had to keep close together, for the "Abdul Azizites" stop travellers in the name of their Sultan, the "Mulai Hafidites" do the same, and, as a matter of fact, all and sundry stop everybody from whom they think they can either beg or steal.

Eight hours' weary march beneath the rays of a scorching sun and we come in sight of Al-Kazar, and cross the great battlefield known as "The Field of the Three Kings' Fight." Here in 1587 Dom Sebastian fought the memorable battle, in which fell the flower of the Portugese nobility. The Christians were defeated with great slaughter; two Moorish kings perished besides Dom Sebastian. It is said that the ground was literally covered with the dead bodies of the

combatants. It is now a rich smiling plain, and has been appropriated by the Sultans as a special grazing ground for their numerous flocks of sheep and herds of cattle and horses. A muddy stream flows through the centre of it, and a crazy apology for a bridge has to be crossed in order to get to the other side of the water. It was here that El Hadj surpassed himself in volubility.

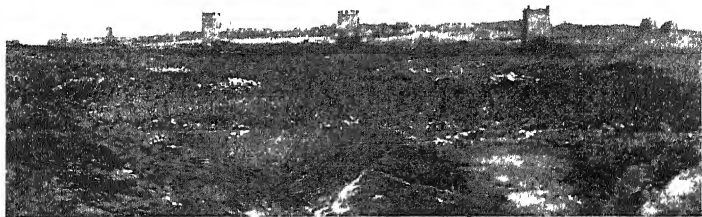
We had all passed over the rotting planks of the dilapidated bridge but El Hadj. That individual was just in the middle of it when "bang!" went a gun, at the sound of which his mule shied and put its foot through one of the planks. The dignity of the rider was much hurt as his feet went up in the air and he toppled over backwards from his perch on the pack-saddle. As he scrambled to his feet and caught hold of the animal's reins, a lank Arab ran up with his six-feet gaspipe of a gun still smoking. "Stop, Sidi!" he shouted, as El Hadj was making the usual acrobatic endeavours to remount by the neck of the mule.

Now the leader and guide of my caravan was much hurt in his pride. To fall from a pack-saddle was most humiliating for such an important personage, and the grins of Absolem and the boys

were sore to the heart of El Hadj. His hand sought his dagger, and in a rage he turned on the newcomer. "Thou son of a pig!" he cried, "who art thou?" "Son of a pig! callest thou me?" spluttered the other as he pulled round his powder horn to reload his gun. "Know thou that I am headman here, and toll must be paid for passing over my bridge. By A'llah! thou son of a she-ass, but I will teach thee to call me 'son of a pig.'"

At this juncture I rode up, ordered El Hadj to remount, and flung a coin to the offended dignitary, who was still furiously ramming the powder down his gaspipe. As we slowly rode away, the two gentlemen reviled each other's ancestors back to the fourth and fifth generation. Grandfathers' bones and Grandmothers' ashes were flung to the winds till we were far out of earshot, when at last that old gun was loaded and a shot came flying after us as a final curse.

Leaving Al-Kazar on the right, the track follows along to Jer Raafi over long stretches of perfect arable land, uncultivated and burnt by the sun. Roman remains, still in good preservation, can be seen away on the left and recall



LINE OF ROMAN FORTS.



FORDING A RIVER.

[See page 35.]



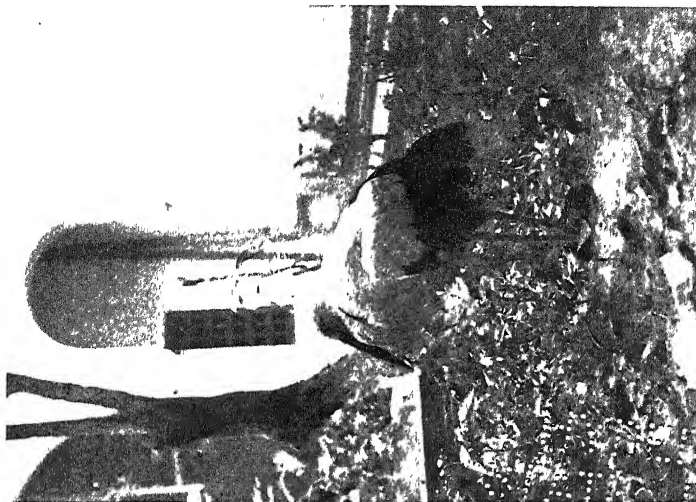
FIRST GLIMPSE OF FEZ.

[See page 45.]

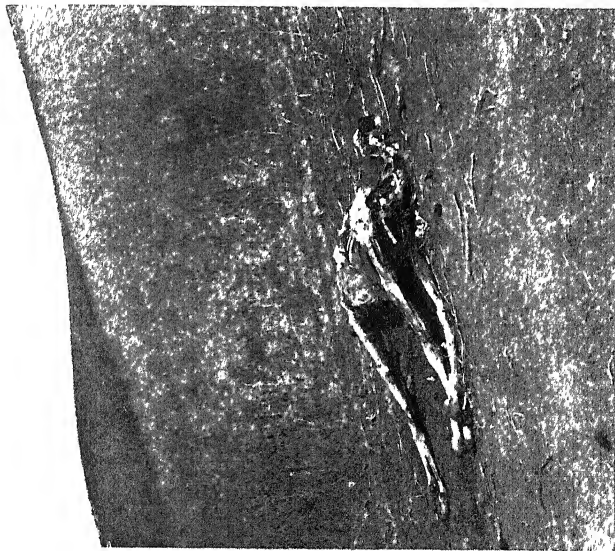
the time when that great race overran the country which they called Mauretania. I much regretted not having sufficient time to enable me to visit the ponderous old towers and huge crumbling walls, but my instructions to get to Fez as soon as possible were imperative. "Plod, plod" went the weary animals over the hot ground; the sun scorched down until the brass trappings were burning to the touch. For days the route became monotonous to a degree—bare brown hills and plains, dried water-courses, in places white with salt encrustations, followed one another in endless progression. The wearisome amble of the tired mules, the chafing of the high-peaked Moorish saddles with short stirrups, caused every movement of the animal to become a torment. The lack of variety hour after hour renders a prolonged ride in Morocco a terrible penance, fit to expiate the most grievous sin. Day after day I wondered to myself whether we should ever reach Fez. Amid the soul-sickening desolation of the parched plains, the fierce glare of the sun that seared our very eyeballs and dried our throats into a strangling torture, together with the irritating chafing of our clothing upon our weary bodies, the whole caravan became

thoroughly depressed in spirits. The Moorish idea in respect to heavy robes, "that which keeps out cold will keep out heat," was not applicable in my case, and I proposed to El Hadj that I should remove my heavy d'jellaba and uncover my head from the stifling hood; but he strongly objected.

"No, Sidi, keep thy face covered, for we are now far away from all help, should one of these sons of Shaitan, whom you see 'on yonder hill, know that I was leading a N'zerani through their country, then a whisper from him would bring his thieving tribesmen on us, and we should be as thou seest there." He pointed to the roadside, where the skeleton of a camel lay bleaching in the sun. The poor beast had fallen under its burden and been left to die as its reward for its years of service and labour to its master. "At Shemacha," continued El Hadj, "thou shalt rest in thy tent safe from prying eyes." This village proved to be a group of wretched hovels overrun by naked children and mangey dogs, who shrieked and barked around us as we rode through them into the village. The headman, in all his dignity, quickly came to see who dared to enter his suzerainty without first begging his permission



SACRED STORK IN MY GARDEN AT FEZ.



THE FATE OF A FAITHFUL SERVANT.

A'llah only knows what lies were invented by El Hadj respecting my identity, but he evidently satisfied the village chief with the result that a big wooden bowl of sour milk was sent out to me with a cordial "Marhabba bi-K-um" ("Welcome to my house").

The night was made hideous by the howling of the dogs round the tent. Poor half-starved creatures are these, more jackal than dog, their only food being the carcasses of wretched animals that fall by the wayside. Sometimes before even death arrives, these pariah dogs come from the villages to fight and snarl around the body, and leave the bones picked clean to dry and bleach in the blazing sun. It struck me as being peculiar that in Morocco, where there is so much carrion, vultures are rarely seen; but these dogs make very good substitutes. All night long these unclean creatures prowled round the tent, and I was kept busy until daybreak, throwing any kind of missile that was handy at their ugly heads, as they ventured their noses inside the tent-flap after stray scraps.

In the morning we had started to trek, and I was thanking my lucky stars that one more day was passed through in safety, when the guards

rushed up suddenly and clutched my stirrups. With threatening gestures they swore that we should not go. El Hadj was having the usual loud argument with the headman; guns were raised, and things began to wear a very serious aspect. What it was all about, I could not at first gather, and the vile vituperation shrieked out at each other with menacing aspect, was simply appalling in its intensity. The climax was reached as El Hadj gave the headman a violent blow, resulting in the old man falling over his own gun and breaking the stock clean off. Out came the cruel-looking curved daggers that every Moor carries on him. Hardwick and I whipped out our revolvers and prepared to make a fight of it.

"What is it all about? Quick! Tell me, Hadj!" said I.

"These spawn of pigs," quoth he, "want another quarter-dollar and I have given them two dollars already. May their fathers rot in their graves! They are a thieving race!"

And so for a quarter-dollar (about sevenpence halfpenny in English money) this rogue of mine had endangered our lives. Rather angrily, I ordered him to at once pay the extra sum demanded, and we rode away to catch up the



EL HADJ.

(From an oil painting by the Author.)

others, who by this time had got some distance ahead.

At this point the trek became wretchedly wearisome. Hour after hour we painfully pushed on over a flat waterless country. The animals began to feel the continuous strain of the long ride, as it was now six days since we had left the coast. The monotony of the dry dusty roads affected us almost to the point of lethargy. The muleteers had stopped crooning their love-songs in the hoods of their d'jellabas and had replaced urging their animals with oaths, by the easier method of prodding their tender parts with a packing-needle. The poor brutes jogged along with their heads bobbing up and down, like that of the disjointed china mandarin which sits on my desk at home and eternally nods at me. Water is scarce and the heat intolerable. Hardwick gallantly tried to cheer the way by singing "Rocked in the cradle of the deep," but his throat was parched, his voice croaked, and he is tone deaf. So I told him to "Shut up." Our tempers were sorely tried, and in a huff he spurred his jaded animal to the front and left me to vent my sullen temper on the hot, breathless air. Vainly we looked with sad, hollow eyes straight in front,

for a glimpse of the hills that encircle Fez. In endless rotation, we alternately mounted and descended the undulating waste lands. Occasionally we met a straggling group of sorry-looking villagers, taking their stuff to a weekly market-place. One such group impressed itself upon my mind. First came a few poor little over-laden donkeys, driven by a bare-headed, bare-legged urchin; next came the father, gaunt, miserable, grey-headed and hollow-cheeked, with an old gun, carried at the ready, riding bare-backed on an apology for a horse, all sores and bones; the mother followed on foot, in rags, and carrying a baby that looked across her shoulder with big, black, starving eyes at our cavalcade, as we passed them by; then came a girl or two, leading emaciated, ophthalmic children, with flies buzzing about their eyelids; and so the sad-looking and miserable procession went by. Listlessly and with drooping heads we continued the dull journey, till, reaching a slight eminence—Joy of Joys!—there away in the front were the gleaming waters of the Ouad Sebou, turning and twisting like a golden snake across the red brown plain. This is the last river to cross before reaching Fez. At the sight of the water our lightened spirits

acted on each in their different ways. The crooning of the love-songs began again under the hoods, the jaded mules needed no packing-needle to spur their flagging steps, and Hardwick turned back and offered me a cigarette.

The river was low, and thus the fording of the stream was a comparatively easy task ; so fatigued were we, that we determined to camp for the night at the village on the other side and not push on to Fez until the next day, as it was fully a day's march yet to get to that city. Still we were nearer Fez now, and in high spirits at the thought of being so close to our journey's end. Directly the tents had been pitched, the animals tethered, the headman satisfied, and the guards arranged for, Hardwick and I made our way to a shallow reach in the river for a much-required bathe. How beautiful was the rippling water splashing round our bodies after six days without even as much as a wash ! No sooner had we got into the water than a motley crowd of boys and girls from the village appeared. These infants sat in a row on the bank and solemnly discussed our appearance and our antecedents. Our white bodies glistening in the water were a source of much speculation and remarks. One boy waxed dogmatic

“Look on the N’zeranis,” said he, pointing to us with his finger; “they have white bodies, and are going to Hell!” The tone of quiet conviction in which he stated the, to him, self-evident fact, was most amusing. The effect was somewhat marred by his begging for our piece of soap immediately afterwards. That night, for the first time during the journey, El Hadj came into our tent after dinner, squatted himself down, and began to smoke a cigarette. He sucked in the smoke with so much pleasure that I asked him why he had abstained for so long. Then the old rogue’s eyes sparkled, and he settled himself down on a cushion to tell his story to us.

“Sidi, thou must know that I was born in Sus, and came of a family of acrobats. With my father and two brothers I visited all the cities in Morocco, and thus it is that I know all the roads from Tarudant to Tangier. One day when we were performing in the ‘Sok’ at Tangier a N’zerani took my father to the big hotel there, and offered him much money to go with him and perform in strange countries. We Moors do not like to leave our country, which A’llah has blessed for all ‘true believers’ to live in; but we had a hard life, and often we

finished our performances at the market-places of the different towns we visited with very little *flus*, and often had to go hungry. My father was offered three English sovereigns a week for us all. This sum was riches indeed, and my father thought that in a year he could return and be a Kaid in his own country, therefore he accepted the offer that the Giaour made unto him. We went in a big boat to a place called America. I well remember how we were all ill, and how we would crouch to hide ourselves in corners, to get away from the big devil in the belly of the ship, who grunted and growled and spat up fire from its two black horns in the middle of the boat. Wahli-Wahli ! How we trembled as we sat huddled up and listened to our father, who told tales to us of the N'zeranis ! How they caught the devils and made these Jinns work for them.

“ When we reached America everything frightened us, and we saw how all that our father had told us was true indeed. My father wanted to go back to his own country, where there was sunshine and no Jinns ; but the great white man told him not to be a fool. Soon they took us in what they called a train, with

a big devil in front who rushed along quicker than the fleetest horse. It spat clouds of black smoke and fire in its agony, as they made it work. I have heard a horse shriek in pain, and that is horrible to hear; but it is nothing to the terrible screams of the Jinn that tore along with us behind it. Since then, Sidi, I know what your steam-engines are, and I am not afraid of them; but in all Morocco you will find nobody, except a few who live in the coast towns, who do not believe as we did then, and also, that the N'zeranis were sold to the devil by Mahomet and that they are accursed. Ah! to kill an unbeliever is good, for they are the enemies of Mahomet—the Prophet of God—Bismillah!

“From America we went to many other countries and saw other strange sights, and learnt much. But it is not good for Moors to leave their country, and, by A'llah! we were shown our folly and punished accordingly. My father was killed by a train, one of my brothers broke his back falling from a trapeze, and the other loved a white girl who made him jealous, so he cut her throat. They took him, and when it was all over, I ran away and made my pilgrimage to Mecca. Three times have I

performed my holy task, and much have I gained in experience. When I finally returned to Môrocco, I bought mules out of what little I had been, by mercy of A'llah, able to save, and as I speak a smattering of the tongue of the N'zeranis I became a guide in Tangier; thus, I am with you, Sidi!"

At this point of the story our narrator eyed the whisky-bottle with such an appealing look that I offered him a drink. He drank the fascinating fluid with great signs of enjoyment.

"What is this, O Hadj?" said I. "I thought it was forbidden to a 'true believer' to drink wine or spirits!"

"That is true, Sidi," he replied; "and I would not do so in front of those ignorant 'sons of dogs' outside. What are they but scumpigs?" And the look on his face showed very plainly his supreme contempt for his more orthodox brethren. I was tempted to get a little more information out of this old hypocrite, and therefore plied him with a few questions.

"Now, El Hadj," said I, "why do you speak thus of your countrymen? You say that the N'zeranis are accursed. Surely you saw during your travels how much better they are

than these countrymen of yours outside?" I was not prepared for the passionate burst of eloquence which followed my question, as, with fierce eyes and waving arms, he poured forth his confused ideas with bitter emphasis.

"What is it you say, Sidi! the N'zeranis are better? How? Show it me. Did I not see prisons in your lands, larger than the biggest Kaid's house in Morocco? Have I not heard enough and more of what is done in your great cities? When I was in Manchester, did not the boys who saw me in the streets throw stones at me, because I wore a turban? Yes, I was a stranger. As for these poor countrymen of mine, they are fools, ignorant sons of pigs; they know nothing and the Kaids (may they rot) torture them and rob them, but when the harvest is good they forget all that and know not better. Truly they are as animals, and I despise them, but would they be any better if you N'zeranis came here? What have the men of your country done for them? Your people come here and cheat our Sultan by selling useless things to him which have to be paid for. He has to find the money somehow to fill your pockets; and where does he get it? From the

Kaids. They in turn grind us, torture us, murder us, and steal our goods. Can we save any money to enable us to live at ease in our old age? If I be the fortunate possessor of a hundred mules, am I safe? Any day, I might be thrust into prison, my family left to starve, and I should be tortured until I gave up all; even then, I should be further tortured to tell of more which I had not. Do you bring us relief? No! you bring us strong drink to make us like unto the swine that wallow in the mire; you laugh in our beards and want our land. Have I not seen it in other countries? In India? In Algeria? In Egypt? I cannot read books, but I have done better than that, for I have seen with mine eyes and heard with mine ears. I call my fellow-countrymen fools, ay, fools; for they are pigs, sons of pigs. Let them go and learn, yes, learn from books, learn from you, and when they know what things are, let them thrust you out from this country and keep what A'llah has blessed and given unto them for their rightful heritage!"

Both Hardwick and I were very much surprised at this talk from an uncultured muleteer, but it made us more properly realize the

disaffection and trouble in India and to understand more fully the grave responsibilities that attend the governing of a subjugated race.

"But, El Hadj!" said I, "if you feel so bitter against us, why do you come with me as a guide?"

"Ah! Sidi!" he replied, "I must live, and N'zeranis pay well."

"But suppose I was attacked on the road, what would you do then?"

At this he arose and salaamed. "Sidi!" said he, "while I take your money, you are my master; I would fight for you and protect you till I was killed. Have you not seen how very careful I have been in coming through this unsettled country at this dangerous time? But if I were not taking your money and I met you while you were travelling through the land, I would wait for you behind a rock and kill you like a dog!"

At hearing this I answered, "Well, Hadj, thanks very much; go and look after the animals and be ready early in the morning." At this he made a salaam and left the tent.

Hardwick was just turning into bed. "Eh! old chap," said I. "What do you think of our old fire-cater now?"

“Well !” he replied, “ from what I can see, he is not such a bad sort. He is certainly frank about the matter. His travels have evidently raised him above the level of those other darkies outside the tent, and with a good education he would have been better ; but still you cannot get them to like us, however well you treat them. Educate them, and you fondly imagine they will be grateful for showing them the advantages of civilization and their years of degradation ; but nevertheless, they hate us, and—well, after all, why bother ? I’m sleepy.” And he arranged his pillow so as to have his revolver ready to hand, then, with a yawn, he finished with the words from the master-poet, “ The east is east and the west is west, and never the twain shall meet ! ”

We started at 3 a.m. the following day, for it was a long ride to Fez, and we wanted to reach there before the gates were shut at sunset. El Hadj was a little shamefaced at his outburst of the previous evening, and rode at my side all the way enlivening me with tales of his adventures. He was a most extraordinary man, and had travelled more than I thought. One day I will put his adventures in print, as they are well worth recording.

On approaching the city we passed the little town of Oualily perched high up on a hill. Here is buried the first Edriss, the patron saint of Fez. No Europeans have ever been allowed to approach this most sacred spot.

A little incident now occurred which might have had very serious consequences; but the situation was saved by the presence of mind of my invaluable guide.

From round a slight promontory four armed tribesmen came galloping up. Before any precautions could be taken they had approached me, and saw I was not a Moor. "Ah! what is this? A N'zerani coming through our country? You must at once come with us to our Kaid," they cried, and ordered my caravan to turn and follow them over the hill. This was a serious matter. Once in the clutches of the Kaid and in his Kasbah, it would have been doubtful of our ever leaving it. El Hadj, after much persuasion, obtained permission for us to continue our journey by swearing on his oath that I was the "Broose" Consul and had adopted native dress for comfort in travelling.

The word "Broose" acted like magic. Since Dr. Vassel had passed up on his way to Fez, the

Germans or "Broose," as the natives called them, were regarded as the saviours of the country. So, much to Hardwick's disgust, we had to be, for the nonce, "Broose." With smiles and good wishes, the horsemen rode off, and the caravan once more turned in the desired direction.

Near Fez we crossed a stone bridge built by a French engineer in the time of Mulai Hassan. It is one of the few existing bridges in Morocco. At last we caught sight of the minarets of Fez! Little points of twinkling white appearing just above the horizon. Behind the blue haze of the distance the towering heights of the mighty Atlas reared their snow-capped heads.

We entered Fez by the Bab-el-Seegma. Above the horseshoe opening of the gateway, two sundried ghastly objects grinned down to warn us of the fate of rebels and the vengeance of the ruling Sultan upon his enemies. El Hadj explained that these were the heads of soldiers of the Rogui. With a shudder we passed beneath the awful things. The motley crowd eyed us with suspicion. While El Hadj took the baggage animals to the "fondak" we followed Absolem to the house of one of his friends, who, he assured me, would lodge us until a better accommodation

could be found. The narrow streets and lofty houses contrasted strongly with the sun-scorched plains we had so recently quitted. Everything looked old and decayed. The high, gloomy, and crumbling bare walls, pierced at intervals with narrow loopholes, grated windows and low entrances, guarded by thick wooden doors studded with rows of round-headed nails, resembling nothing else so much as coffin lids, are most oppressive. Series of arches are erected at great heights across the narrow streets, buildings are thrown like bridges from one house to another and we had to stoop over our animals' necks to avoid being stunned by the thick wooden supports that make the streets a succession of dark tunnels. Through these sombre passages the mules stumbled over the uneven ground, oozing with moisture and noisome with decaying refuse. We heard on every side the trickling of water, and constantly crossed streams rushing from mossy walls and disappearing, with a hollow murmur, under the houses. Our progress often was delayed as we met donkeys, mules, and camels laden with bulging sacks which scraped the walls of the narrow causeways. Then for a time we heard cries and fierce arguments in the semi-darkness,

and shouts of "Balak! Balak!" from those who were behind, until, squeezed and crushed against the walls, we tore our way past. Then suddenly we emerged into an open street, with just a narrow strip of blue sky visible high up between the sombre-looking walls.

Through a wretched doorway I caught a glimpse of a cool courtyard with white horseshoe arches, their symmetrical curves picked out in delicate laces of arabesque. A fountain in the centre plashed merrily and watered the lovely flowers which grew around its base, giving a delightful sense of refreshing coolness to the place. Here we dismounted. Absolem showed the way in, and presented us to the venerable-looking old man in white, who received us with low bows and a hearty "Marhabba bi-K-um." Although I have been in many more beautiful and richer houses in Morocco, this white sunlit court was a veritable paradise after our long, tedious journey. The house was in two storeys, the women's apartments being well away out of view. Around the four sides of the courtyard were large bare rooms, in one of which Hardwick and I were duly installed. Seated on cushions on the floor we listened to old Abdallah ben Mokta, our host,

who introduced himself more fully. He was a merchant, and possessed a large store in the "sok" as well as a shop in the bazaar. He had agents in all parts of Morocco, and his house was a meeting-place where men from north, south, east, and west came to discuss their business. Many strange stories he told us of the life and customs of his country. During my stay in Fez I often went round to sip tea in his garden, where I met many of my old friends from the interior. In the cool of the evening we would sit in a circle, and each would tell his story and relate the news from afar. It is in this manner that news is carried from place to place, for in Morocco there is no other means of communication between one city and another but by the gossip of the members of a newly arrived caravan, as in the times of Scripture history.

CHAPTER III

CIVIL WAR IN MOROCCO

Abdallah ben Mokta—He tells of the civil war in Morocco—The Glow of the Atlas—"King-maker"—Si Aziz and his account of Casa-Blanca—Carnage in Casa-Blanca—A wful fate of a Spanish family—Wholesale shooting—Moorish terror of French troops.

THE Moors are early risers, and soon after dawn we were aroused from the first comfortable sleep we had been able to get since leaving Tangier, by a black slave, with a message that our host awaited the honour of our presence. El Hadj was in the patio to report "All's well!" The animals were comfortably stabled for the modest sum of twopence halfpenny each per day. Absolem was to attend as servant and "would I allow him and the boys to see their friends and rest after the long journey?" My consent given, he left me, well satisfied in mind and pocket. The morning repast is a most substantial meal, consisting of many dishes of meat served up in various

forms. After this meal, taken with our host, cushions were placed in the shadiest corner of the garden, where we smoked our cigar  ttes and lounged in comfort to have a long talk on passing events.

News was scarce in Fez just then, owing to the unsettled state of the country, which rendered travelling a dangerous proceeding. The city was in a state of nervous hysteria from lack of reliable information as to what was occurring in other parts of Morocco. Abdallah assured me that my servants would be the centre of inquiring groups of townsmen. All Fez by now would know that I had arrived from the coast, and when the Sultan heard that an English journalist was in the town, he would certainly send for me to have audience with him. Once I had been called to the Palace, all doors would be opened to welcome me, and I should not be required to produce the letters of introduction that I had brought from Tangier. He "was much honoured that I should have chosen his house to stay at, for certainly I should see that many visitors would pay calls at his house to gather the latest news. And now," he continued,

"if it pleases thee, I will tell thee a little of the affairs of our 'Sunset Land.'"

A large brass tray was put before us filled with almonds, broken walnuts, dried grapes, and splendid luscious dates from Tafilet. A big bredda filled with water was put close at hand and occasionally handed round to us, as we sat taking our ease. These breddas are made of porous earthenware and keep the contents deliciously cool. We whiffed our cigarettes and nibbled the sweetmeats from the tray, as we listened to the old gentleman. People were continually coming in and out on business, a merchant to change money, a camel-driver with bales of Manchester cotton, a servant for money to buy candles with, for the Moor is always the purse-holder in his house; some came begging, others with goods for sale, and so on. Not a bargain was lost nor a mistake made by Abdallah ben Mokta, who, having taken a long draught from the bredda and given an order for a negro to be whipped for breaking a jug, commenced his interesting narrative.

"It is by the will of A'llah that thy footsteps have been directed to my house

and that I should be permitted to speak to thee, an Englishman and a writer of things to be set down, for it is I, and I alone, that shall tell thee the words of truth, being that I am a protected subject of your great and glorious country. Thus it is, you see, that I am rich and fear not the destruction of my property. I hope for a speedy termination to the unsettled state of affairs in my country. I am old, my bones are weary, and I wish to live in peace and quietude at my age. By the mercy of A'llah—to whom be praise—I have saved a little money, but when our Lord—Abdul Aziz—did leave Fez, and the English Consul, with the other Christians, went from here, envious eyes were cast in my direction. Curses were thrown at the 'protected one' for consorting with the infidels, and till once more the country is quiet and your Consuls return, I may be eaten up by the Kaid. Then my years of toil will end in a prison, to be starved and have my bones twisted and broken by those who envy me. We of the Faith have clearly seen that our Lord Abdul Aziz was breaking away from the rules of life of a true believer; we have seen for years his hankering after the

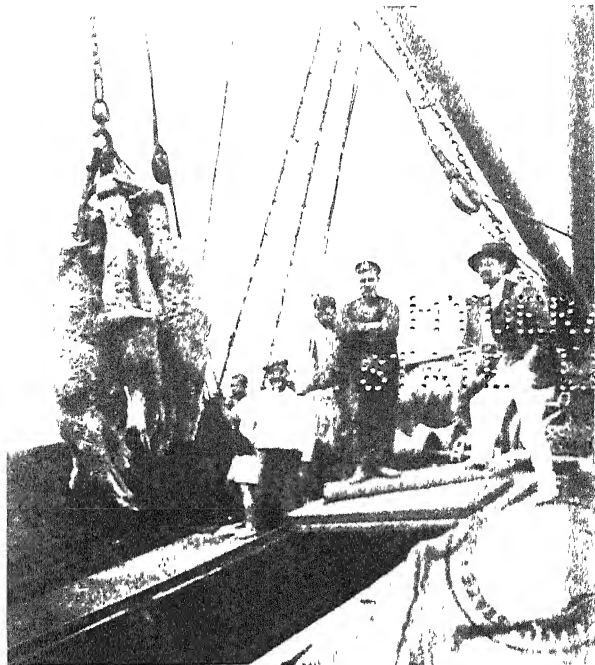
ways of the infidels, and our Lord Mulai Hafid (whom Allah bless) is a good and true Mussulman. We did not like to see the money wrung from us to pay for useless toys and fearful machines, which run about with no animals to pull them along; we all know that they are but instruments of the evil spirits. As each new devil-machine of the N'zeranis arrived at Fez to flout our faces, brows were lowered and hatred grew in our hearts. When iron lines were laid outside Fez and it became known that a fire-spitting machine was to take our Lord the Sultan and his N'zerani friends to the palace garden some little distance from the city, then the tribes did tear them up and took them to make weapons.

“The story of how the wives of our Sultan were made shamed in the eyes of men, by being forced to balance themselves on two-wheeled things you call bicycles, which A'llah knows is not possible and are not for true believers; how the N'zeranis watched from the windows to laugh and mock as they fell off. When the tribes, who were being bled for money—money—always money, for those unholy things, learnt of this shame, then did they rise

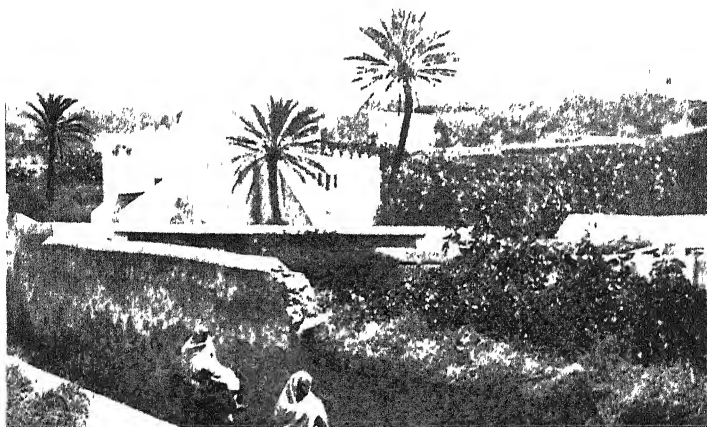
up and say—‘A'llah is One and Mahomet is his prophet! We will have no more of this.’

“The great Glowî of the Atlas came with his host of tribesmen and said, ‘We will have a true believer for our Sultan and not a trafficker with the Infidels.’ So he called Mulai Hafid, the elder brother of Abdul Aziz, and proclaimed him Sultan. Therefore is our country divided and made bloody, and nothing is safe—neither goods nor life. In the South the tribes fight great battles amongst themselves, and—Ah! But here comes Si Aziz, he has lately arrived from Marrakesh, and he will tell thee what happened there.”

A tall and stately Moor enveloped in the whitest of silk haiks, slowly approached. Before he had reached us I had recognized an old friend from Abda. “Ala’ salam’t-ek” (“May you have come with your good fortune”), he cried. How his face beamed as he sat himself beside me and took hold of my hand and clasped it in his, as is their custom, during the whole conversation which followed. The greetings and expressions of solicitude of an Arab are numerous and effusive. Question and counter-question follow each other in a recognized formula :



ON THE COAST OF MOROCCO.
Embarking live sheep.



“How are you?” “How are your children?” “How are your cattle?” “Is your house quite well?” By the term “the house” is meant the wife and womenfolk. Moorish etiquette debars the Arab from making, in the presence of men, any direct reference to his wife or to his friends’ wives, all the questions being answered by the inevitable “La bas, el hamdu l’I’llah (“All well, the praise to God”) repeated each time, sounded monotonous to Hardwick, who, not understanding much Arabic at that time, said peevishly, “Oh! stow those ‘La bas,’ and let him tell the news!”

Si Aziz was an Abda man, tall and dignified in demeanour. The Abda are a powerful tribe in the south of Morocco, their province having only one sea-port, Saffi. It is the nearest port to Marrakesh, but a reef in the harbour renders it dangerous for shipping and, for want of a wharf, craft are often compelled to anchor outside for days together without being able to communicate with the shore. When the bar cannot be safely crossed, steam-vessels generally land their cargoes at Mogador, the next southern port; it is then sent back overland to Saffi. The Abda are pure Arabs, and are the horse-breeders of Morocco. Their

province and the adjoining one of Dukella are the finest grain-producing districts in the whole country. On account of their fine physique, the men from these two provinces are recruited for the Sultan's "Makheznia," of which I will tell later. Si Aissa ben Omar, the Kaid of Abda, is second only to the Glowi of the Atlas, as the most powerful chief in Morocco. With the latter he espoused the cause of Mulai Hafid, who has rewarded him by making him his Grand Vizier.

My friend, Si Aziz, had no cause to love the last Government. When I stayed with him at Abda some few years ago, his house was a heap of ruins. Round the blackened walls he had thatched huts for his family, his wives, brothers, and father. A few years previous to my visit they were a rich family; a strong enclosure of high walls encircled their two-storied house and kept their numerous flocks and herds safe at night. He and his brothers were called away to fight for the Sultan against the Rogui. On their return they found a scene of desolation, the house sacked and burnt, the women carried off, the flocks and herds gone, and their father in prison. During their absence the Kaid had visited the house.

Si Aziz was only the fourth son, but, being of a masterful spirit, he took charge as head of the household. First he had to slave, to find the money to ransom his father from the Kaid. This he did after many years of hard toil and saving, and with what result? I remember an old white-headed man with one eye, who used to wander round about the ruins of the house. He walked in a peculiar twisted manner, incessantly muttering to himself. Judging from his large frame it was evident that he was once a fine upright, athletic man. This was the father of Si Aziz. Money had bought him from the dungeons of the Kaid, but he returned to his home and family a crippled, half-blind idiot.

Si Aziz was a Hafidite, and after going through the fighting away in the south, came up to Fez to try and obtain a recognition of his services from the new Sultan. Seated there in the garden, with the birds twittering in the orange trees and even venturing to fly down to the fingers of this fierce-eyed Arab, who mechanically held out small pieces of nuts for them to peck at, we listened as he told us the tale of blood and treachery.

He commenced, "There is no being and no power except from God the Great, but I have been

sore perplexed to know where to find thee, O my friend ! I have been to Mogador to search for thee, as in the old times, for many things have happened since I last looked upon thy face ; but listen and I will tell thee all.

“ For many years we have had infidel things thrown at us. We do not want them. Thou rememberest the trouble when the new copper coins from Europe were introduced. The people from the country do not understand and do not want new things ; we know our own copper and desire no other. Yes ! it has been said that the new coins were better ; but who knows ? Perhaps ! It may have been a trick to cheat us. We rose up and killed those who brought them from the coast. We would have none of them, and if they had not been withdrawn, then this war would have been earlier. We saw no more of that trouble, but we forget nothing ! We were told it was for money they had lent to our Lord the Sultan years before—A'llah iariff (‘ God knows ’), but we knew nothing of those things. We only knew that the N’zeranis wanted to come into our country. Was I not with you when the French boatmen were shot at Mogador ? And Am Floos brought his tribesmen to protect

the town till the white boat went away? The French say all they want is what they call 'pacific penetration'—that means they want our country. A'llah! A'llah! darr ni ras-i, my head aches when I think of all these lies. And then they came to build lines for a devil-machine at Casa-Blanca. Who gave them permission? They knew we did not want it and that we should stop them. Bah! They did it so that they could bring their soldiers for their 'pacific penetration.' I was at Casa-Blanca, and I killed one of the N'zeranis with my knife. There was no one there to stop us, so we went on killing, killing! Before the terrible ships came, no one dared to interfere. Your Consuls shut themselves up in their houses. Mr. Madden, the English Consul, who when at El Souira refused to make me a 'protected' man, was there. He shut his home and held his doors, and I could not get at him with my knife. By A'llah! the N'zeranis were afraid. They rushed to their consuls' houses and shot at us from their roofs. But we caught some in their own houses. Ha! those houses were beautiful. We of the country had never seen such wonderful things. We were afraid of them. Surely they must

have been from the evil spirits. So we smashed and tore down all we saw. At one house, an 'Espanol' N'zerani shot at us from his window. A'llah ! A'llah ! he shot well. Hassan of Dukella, and Hamet his brother, rushed to the door, but when we picked them up after they had fallen, both had been shot exactly between the eyes. Wahli-Wahli,—he could shoot, that N'zerani. Many fell before we smashed the door, but we only found his woman. We wrecked and burnt and sang. We searched for many hours for that N'zerani, but found him not. Moussa, the 'one eyed,' found some wine, and the accursed drink of the N'zerani turned true Mussulmans into fiends. I took none of it, but I watched as they shrieked and danced round the blazing heap of goods in the courtyard. For hours they danced, when suddenly Moussa fell over a board in a corner and disappeared down a hole. We laughed and looked down, and, by A'llah ! we saw the Espanol and Moussa struggling. That N'zerani had been in the hole all the time while they danced over him. We got them both up at last ; Moussa was dead, his throat had been torn out. Before they killed the N'zerani they took him to a room and showed him that which

was his wife. Ay, the sight was not good. He bared his teeth and his eyes grew big, and, although he had no knife, many good Mussulmans knew pain before he fell with knife-wounds that covered his body.

“The unbelieving Jews fared badly. They had no guns, and for months afterwards roamed the country, naked and starving. When the fighting was over we sold the women and children back to those who could pay for them, the young girls for three loaves of sugar, and the older women for less, according to their ugliness. Casa-Blanca was good for looting then; but the big ships came, and we left. Who can stay when big guns send terrible things that burst and blow down a whole house? I remember that Mr. Madden went to the ships and told them not to shoot any more. After this the French soldiers came, so I changed my clothes and came into Casa-Blanca. No clacking tongue could tell of me, nor any one know me. ‘Li-kul ghadwah taam’ (‘For each to-morrow its food’), and I saw that as a ‘friendly Moor’ I could get money with the N’zeranis. I found the city in ruins; its streets littered with dead bodies, while shots and screams yet filled the air with their noise. I

saw the Kaid, Si-bou-Bekr, on a mule following meekly his servants as they gathered up the corpses from the streets. In a deserted house I hid myself and watched from a window. From time to time, troops of soldiers would come down the street, killing everybody and everything. Wahli-wahli! it was worse than before. From a house opposite an old fool of a 'Jehudi' heard the tramp of the French soldiers coming along. He thrust out his head from the window and cried, 'Vivent les Français.' He thought they had come to save him from us; but the answer to his welcome was a bullet through his head. For days I hid in that house, hungry and afraid, with the body of that old Jew, hanging out of the window opposite, for my only company.

"I cannot tell thee of the misery of those few weeks while I stayed in that 'city of shambles' hiding myself in case I should be seen by the prowling soldiers. Those French soldiers are terrible. They are afraid of nothing and one by himself will go out into a crowd of Moors, as if he were their master. A'llah! A'llah! but you should have seen that fearful 'Legion of Foreigners,' as they are called. No, they are a 'legion of devils.' There was one I remember. He was

much taller than I am. He had red whiskers that stuck out from his face like spikes. These men are surely animals, for horse-flies settled on his beard as they would on a horse. This devil-man would drink a gourdful of strong drink, 'Cognac' they called it. Then he would go out by himself and come back with many horses and clothes and sell them in the 'sok.' When he had spent all the money in strong drink, he would say, 'Ah! I must go out to fetch some more.' 'How did he do it?' you ask. One day from a hilltop I saw him ride out and meet four men of Dukella, good strong men, for I knew them. They rode at him with shouts, and fired as they went; but he did not turn his horse. He shot one man, then rode after the others and shot them one by one. When they were all down he rode from one to the other and collected their clothes and guns, caught their horses, and came back into Casa-Blanca. He was a 'Rustam'—but, there, they are all 'Rustams,' and I thought it was better to get away. So I went to the Showia. Here I found the tribe getting ready to fight. Therefore I went on to Marrakesh. They did not know as I knew, so I left them to be fools to go and be shot down by those against

whom we cannot prevail. Yes, I was right. By A'llah! The French soldiers did slay the Showia tribe in thousands, and how many of the French were killed? A few from stray bullets. That is all. When I was with the Glowi, and we fought the army of Abdul Aziz, it was easy for us. We rode in our thousands, shouting and firing. We carried all before us, and sent the others flying in terror. It was not like fighting the French, who did not run away, and were not afraid of the shrieking tribesmen, but stayed and coolly kept on firing until the horses were on top of them. As Abdul-Kadar, who was there, said, 'By A'llah! we rode at them as we did when we "ate up" the Dukella; but they moved not and before we could wheel round to ride away to reload our guns, we were right upon them. Yet they feared not, and only a few of us were left alive to gallop away. Never had we seen such fighting and understood it not!'

"So you see, O my friend, it is well for us to say that we will not have the N'zeranis, and that we will thrust them into the sea. Those who have fought with them, laugh in their beards when they hear such words spoken from the mouth of a fool. But Mulai Hafid, our Sultan,

is wise, and will deal cleverly with the N'zeranis, and therefore I have come to see him and make my peace with him, for he will know how to trick the N'zeranis, like his father, Mulai Hassan, who is in paradise. Soon the French will leave our country. In'shallah! Now I have told thee all, and must depart in order to see Si Abbas, the Vizier. Good-bye! A'llah issahel tareek-kum" ("May God make your way easy").

With this last kind wish, Si Aziz arose, salaamed to all present, and went out, taking Abdallah with him.

Hardwick was angry. "How could you be so friendly with such a self-condemned specimen?" he said.

"Well," I replied, "it certainly looks peculiar; but he is a good type of a countryman, and his ideas and his actions show exactly the spirit of Morocco. Here you have in Si Aziz a man whose faith teaches him to hate all unbelievers and destroy them if possible. One of a degenerate and oppressed nation, forced to seek semi-protection of the enemies of his faith, to save himself from his own people. Avaricious to a degree, stooping to any mean action to gain his own ends, and, by his own unblushing admission, a

coward! Yet this man once rode for two hours through the country of his enemies, to save a friend of mine and myself from certain death. He is an ignorant savage, apeing a superiority which tradition has handed down as his birth-right. It is pitiable, but that empty tradition is the one thing that keeps the people of Morocco from being worse than vermin. They are already worse than animals. Come! let us go for a stroll, and you will be enabled to see something of these people for yourself."

CHAPTER IV

THE SULTANS OF MOROCCO

Principle of Moroccan sovereignty—Origin of Shereefian dynasties—The Sultans and their European slaves—Mulai Hassan—His Grand Vizier—Lalla Reqia, the lovely slave and the mother of Abdul Aziz—The disgrace of Mulai Mohammed—Abdul Aziz ascends the throne—The lions at Mazagan—Weakness and downfall—Mulai Hafid as governor of Marrakesh—His penury forces him to eke out his scanty income by engaging in commerce—Sells his brother's armoury to his own partisans—Marries daughters of influential Kaids—Hafid proclaimed Sultan—Battle of Settat—Seizes Palace and its treasures at Fez.

ON the third day after I had arrived in Fez a messenger from the Palace came to me, bearing an invitation from the Sultan to present myself before him, for he desired to see me. It will be as well for me here to give a short *résumé* of the history of the Moroccan dynasty in order that the reader may comprehend more fully the political reasons which led Mulai Hafid to command—as it actually amounted to—my presence for this and the succeeding interviews that I had with him.

Moroccan traditions say that following the

break-up of the Merinid Empire (1524), the pilgrims of the Sahara, returning from Mecca, brought two Shorfa back with them. These Shorfa were the ancestors of the two successive Shereefian dynasties. The Draa who founded the Saddian dynasty in Sus was overthrown in the seventeenth century by the Shereef of Tafilet, and he founded the Alaoutic dynasty, which remains to this day. "Shereef" denotes a descendant of the Prophet Mahomet, and thus the Sultan is a holy man. As Shereef, he holds his position as Sultan. None other but a Shereef, or a member of the present family, could aspire to that honour, unless he could prove a higher or more legitimate descent from the Prophet than the other aspirants for the throne. It therefore follows that all Pretenders who claim to be the rightful holders of the throne always base it on a relationship—real or fictitious—to the Sultan or his predecessors; not a very difficult matter when one considers the numerous wives and children possessed by a Moorish monarch. The "Chosen of God," as the Sultans are called, are not, properly speaking, pontifical or religious rulers. Since the Almoravids they have borne the title of "Lord of the



THE SULTAN'S BLESSING.

(Sketched at Fez.)

THE
STATE OF
THE
STATE OF
THE
STATE OF



THE GRAND VIZIER AND HIS STAFF.

[See page 153.]

Believers," and ignore the title of Khalifa which the Sultan of Turkey possesses. They consider themselves the first of all Mohammedans. The whole of the dynastic conception of Moroccan sovereignty is based upon the belief that the "baraka," that is, the power of blessing, is the hereditary and inalienable benediction, and is the celestial unction which sanctifies the Sultan of Morocco. As the great Iman he is entitled to say prayers in the name of all his subjects. To a very great extent this "baraka" renders the Sultan's position impregnable. His faults are excused by attributing them to divine inspiration, which mere mortals are not capable of comprehending. Even his acts of cruelty are invested with a supernatural character, and are accepted by all in the fear that retaliation on the sacred person would have to be answered for on the Day of Judgment, at the bar of the victim's ancestor—the Prophet Mahomet himself. It was owing to this, that the cruelties, which marked the reign of that inhuman monster Mulai Abdallah, of whom it is said that not a day passed without hundreds of his subjects being put to death in the most horrible modes devisable, were accepted without a murmur.

The supposed sanctity of the Shereefian Sultan is well illustrated by the following incident. Mulai Abdallah being once in danger from drowning whilst crossing a river, a negro slave rescued the exhausted "Chosen of God." The slave, presuming to congratulate himself on being able to save so illustrious a personage from an unpleasant termination to his earthly career, was immediately cut down by the sabre of his master. "You, a slave, to suppose that you saved me!" he cried. "Does A'llah need your help to preserve the life of a Shereef and the son of a Shereef?"

It was during the reign of this monarch that the Christian slaves captured by his Sallee pirates were so cruelly treated. It has always been a craze of the Sultans to build, and many of the palaces in Mekenez, in Marrakesh, and also in Fez were erected by these unfortunate creatures. One trait of his brutal nature was to watch the Christians at work, and when one of them was too exhausted to respond to the lashes of the taskmaster, he had the poor wretch thrown into the mud and lime, and built in with the walls.

In the year 1721 Commodore Stewart was sent as Ambassador from England to buy back

to freedom the British slaves. A few hundred returned, but the majority had to remain, as they had turned Mohammedans in order to alleviate their terrible sufferings. However, although these obtained, by thus becoming renegades, some small relief from whippings and torture, and a slightly better treatment than those who did not choose to give up their religion, they were, in the end, worse off, for, by embracing Mohammedanism, they became Moorish subjects, and therefore could not claim English protection. No women ever returned, for they were at once thrust into the harems, and if even a chance offered itself for escape, they were reluctant to avail themselves of the opportunity to go back to their friends and relatives, shamed and dishonoured as they were!

In 1817, Sultan Suliman, in fear of the growing strength of England at Gibraltar, formally agreed to discontinue piracy; but, although not officially recognized, it was still carried on more or less secretly, and it was not until 1856, when Sir John Drummond Hay succeeded in rescuing several prisoners, that the practice was finally put an end to. This was in the days of Mulai Hassan, the father of both Abdul Aziz and Mulai Hafid.

From a Moorish standpoint this monarch was an ideal ruler. Always in the field with a strong army he collected the taxes in person; even if he did lay waste the land through which he passed (for his army had to be fed by the people of the country, wherever he chose to quarter it upon them) he managed to rule the Kaids with a rod of iron, and, better than all, he "tricked the Christians." The failure of the mission of Sir Charles Euan Smith to the Court of Morocco, and the slighting treatment accorded to this representative of such a great Power as England, was considered a real triumph by Moorish diplomatists and a proof of Christian inferiority.

One day a Wazir made the Sultan a present of a Circassian slave, named Lalla Reqia. This lady possessed many other qualities of character, as well as extreme beauty, and soon gained more influence over her spouse than any other in the harem, even including the legitimate wives. Her first-born was Abdul Aziz, who from his infancy became the special favourite of his father. In 1893 Mulai Mohammed, the eldest son of Mulai Hassan, while his father was absent on an expedition, was left to govern with the title of Khalifa, which designated him as the

lawful successor to the throne. However, this prince turned out to be such a cruel scoundrel, and so many complaints were made against him on the return of his father, that Mulai Hassan dismissed him, and nominated Abdul Aziz as the Holder of the Parasol, this being the ensign of sovereignty.

This was quite in accordance with the law of the country. In Morocco the successor to the throne need not be in the collateral line of descent. Generally it is the eldest son who is looked upon as the heir to the paternal "baraka," but this same supposed divine power enables the Sultan to cast his mantle on the favourite son, if he so pleases.

During one of his expeditions, Mulai Hassan died. His Grand Vizier, Si Ahmed ben Mousa, had the body carefully hidden, and kept the knowledge secret until his plans were ready to place Abdul Aziz firmly on the throne. Ben Mousa was as strong a ruler as his late master, and no doubt it suited his designs to have a boy of sixteen years as the nominal Sultan (whom he could control), and be himself the actual ruler of the country. He survived his master but a few years, and at his death Abdul Aziz took the

reins of the Government into his own hands. The young Sultan was predisposed to have a preference for the English, and this feeling was fostered by his Chief Military Instructor, Kaid Maclean, who was afterwards sent with El Hadj el Mehdi-el-Menehbi to the Court of St. James. Aziz was diplomatic enough not to offend the French, and Ben Sliman, a most able Wazir, was sent to Paris and to St. Petersburg. This old Moor was an extremely accomplished conversationalist, and I had many a pleasant chat with him when he came up to Fez to make his peace with Mulai Hafid, little knowing what a dramatic end awaited him, the story of which will be told later.

The first acts of Abdul Aziz gave some hope that he would be a strong-minded ruler ; but, alas ! these hopes were doomed to a speedy and bitter disappointment. Morocco is a land peopled by a savage race, governed by unequal and mediæval iron laws and customs. From a European point of view, the stern cruelties of Mulai Hassan were the acts of an inhuman monster ; but he was, after all, only a creature of circumstance, and the measures he adopted were necessary to keep his turbulent subjects in submission. Cruelty

and oppression are understood in the "Mogreb" as signs of strength, and mercy only considered a symptom of weakness to be taken advantage of. Poor Abdul Aziz is a victim of progress. Possessed of enlightened ideas and a charming character, he, with boyish impulsiveness, had dreams of improving the condition of the people. But the time was not yet ripe for the emancipation of Morocco. His attempts to introduce modern appliances were regarded by his subjects as "trafficking" with the infidels. His endeavours to familiarize the natives with modern inventions by using them himself were looked upon as proof that he had sold himself to the Christians, with the result that very soon murmurs arose, and the seeds of rebellion, thus sown, began to flourish.

Of a naturally kind and easy nature, he allowed himself to be over-persuaded by his European satellites into extravagances which ultimately led to his bankruptcy and ruin. This youthful enthusiasm was excited by various mercenary agents who sold him useless and costly articles. Should he mention that he would like to see a piano, then one hundred of the most costly makes were ordered; a few of these only

would ever reach the palace, where, after being enjoyed for a few days as new toys, they were relegated to the storeroom. Many are the stories of his fads. Once the native population was greatly perturbed when several lions and tigers were landed at Mazagan, to be sent to the Sultan's menagerie at Fez. I well remember at that time I saw a great crowd pushing and struggling outside a large store, from the interior of which the unearthly roars of the savage beasts struck terror into the hearts of the people. The crowd consisted mostly of women, who had been told by their "marabout" that a hair from a lion, surreptitiously put in their husbands' food, would give him the strength and courage of that animal. A friend of mine kept the store and invited me to come in through a side door to watch what was going on inside.

There, in strong cases, lolled the great beasts. Pushing and struggling in at the door were the crowd of anxious women, half afraid to venture. Then one, plucking up courage and taking heart, would advance and gaze with unconcealed astonishment at the animals. She had heard of such creatures existing, but was totally ignorant of the ferocity of these "large yellow and striped dogs,"

as she styled them. Approaching nearer the cage she put her hand through the bar and gave a tug at the coveted whisker of a sleepy old lion. The roar of the poor beast filled the store with its noise and caused a string of camels, which were unluckily passing at the time, to stampede. The effect on the woman was funny in the extreme. She fell in a heap on the floor, then slowly crawled backwards to the door, cursing the Sultan, Abdul Aziz, and his "devil animals." And so, as each woman went through a somewhat similar experience, she took back the tale, with the usual exaggerations, to her village in the country, and told them "how the Sultan was bringing N'zerani devils to tear them all to pieces." This might sound trivial enough to English ears, but in itself it helped to ferment the general discontent throughout the country and hastened the rising against Abdul Aziz, which eventually brought about his downfall.

During all this, Mulai Hafid was at Marrakesh, acting as Viceroy in that southern capital. While his brother was spending vast sums of money on expensive toys, he was being kept exceedingly short of money. For years he eked out his scanty income by engaging in commerce, and at one time

even resorted to the plebeian method of raising funds, by retailing groceries. However, he by no means neglected his opportunities. He allied himself with the most powerful Kaids by a series of prudent marriages. His principal wife is the daughter of the Glowi, the chief of the powerful tribes of the Atlas, and the actual "King-Maker" of Morocco.

He sold the arms from his brother's armoury to the southern tribes at enormous prices, and so armed his partisans at the expense of his relative, and made a splendid profit at the same time. The incapability of Abdul Aziz to cope with the Casa-Blanca outrages and to prevent the occupation of that city by the French, gave him the pretext for raising the standard of revolt, although he had no great faith in the success of his enterprise, and was always prepared for flight in the event of fate deciding against him.

Abdul Aziz was fully aware that he would not stem the dangerous tide that had set in and was threatening not only his throne but his life, and desired to obtain help from the French troops. Secretly he sent large bribes to the Ulemas at Fez, with the message that they should proclaim it lawful for a Moslem Sultan to call in the aid of

Christian troops, should he think it necessary to quell any rising. This mighty religious Council replied, that if a Moslem sovereign's power had become so weak that he required help from Infidels, then he had no longer the support or the confidence of his people, and therefore was unworthy of the throne, and could not consider himself the accepted ruler of the country. In the mosques of Fez the name of Abdul Aziz was at once omitted from the prayers of the faithful, and the name of Mulai Edriss, the patron saint of Fez, substituted in place thereof. This was practically the first intimation received by the townspeople that Abdul Aziz was deposed. The Ulemas and notables chose Mulai Hafid and proclaimed him Sultan. His uncle Mulai Abdes-Salem Amarina was made Viceroy at Fez while the new Sultan was in the south fighting for the "Holy Cause."

The French general at Casa-Blanca was instructed by his Government that he was not in any way to interfere with the internal dissensions of Morocco. The most formal orders were given to General d'Amade that he should, under no circumstances, place his troops in the service or let them assist in the cause of Abdul Aziz. This

monarch was utterly defeated in a pitched battle at Settat, and had to flee for his life. After a ride of twenty-two hours from the battlefield, he arrived at Casa-Blanca in an exhausted condition and put himself under the protection of the French. The majority of the most powerful tribes now proclaimed themselves on the side of Mulai Hafid.

In face of the fact that he had accepted the throne to perform the task his brother was incapable of doing, namely, to drive the Christians out of the country, Mulai Hafid, much against his private wishes, was forced to proclaim a holy war against the French. With this object he left Marrakesh *en route* for Casa-Blanca. The French anticipated the movement, and had marched inland and captured the Kasbah of Meduina, hardly any resistance being offered against them. The news of this reached Mulai Hafid and his army when they were about forty miles from that place, and when the reconnoitring parties of French troops reached the Moorish camp, they found the Sultan and his army had fled. Mulai Hafid did not relish an encounter with the French, and had taken a good opportunity to get away to Fez, where he at once seized the palace and all the

treasures that had been left behind by his brother, when he fled to the French.

The position of the new Sultan was still most precarious. The city was but half-hearted in his favour. He had rivals in three other Pretenders to the throne, who all had their respective partisans, and for a time most of the populace were in their favour rather than in his, for he had run away from the French regiments, who he thought were pursuing him to Fez. He shut himself in the palace and was in daily fear of his life. For weeks he waited, trembling with anxiety and dread. As each fresh fugitive arrived from the south with his burden of exaggerated rumours, so the fears of the new monarch increased in proportion. Word came that the tribes there were again rising, this time in favour of Aziz. Then the Glowi and Si Aissa left Fez with the greater part of the army, for Marrakesh. Now he was without his chief supporters and without an army, shut up in the palace, surrounded by sycophants, and in a city of luke-warm adherents. Only too well did he know the abject and treacherous character of his countrymen. He therefore hastily formed some kind of government, and in so doing, was compelled to appoint the

friends and relatives of his principal partisans, whether they were capable of holding office or not. Forced to conciliate his chief supporters, the Kaids Glowî and Si Aïssa, he was obliged to choose his ministers from among the family and followers of those powerful chiefs, and as a result of this, a set of men were appointed who were totally unfit to fill the positions they were placed in. The tribes around Fez were in active revolt, threatening to attack Fez at the time I reached that city.

CHAPTER V

FIRST INTERVIEW WITH MULAI HAFID

Visit of the "Harabas"—The "Makheznia"—Mulai Hafid—Asks me to draw his portrait—His eagerness for news—His antipathy to the French—His pro-English tendencies—He appoints me his special correspondent and confirms it by "firman"—Treasure house of the Palace—Sultan provides house—Sanitary conditions of the city.

ON the morning appointed for my interview with Mulai Hafid, two officials from the Palace, garbed in a curious-looking uniform, paid me a visit. They were Mr. Belton, the new drill instructor, and his Khalifa, Mr. Redman. As a very great compliment to me, they were sent by the Sultan to act as my escort to the Palace, and to be present at the interview. Their uniforms were certainly most gorgeous, and I was given to understand that they were designed by the Sultan himself, in order to impress the natives. His Majesty's artistic conceptions were evidently most bizarre. The style was a mixture of Moorish, Turkish, and Albanian brigands'

costumes; unfortunately, the native tailors are very primitive in their methods of "cutting-out" and "fitting," and the result of the Sultan's ideas, together with their workmanship, was something like a clown's dress with a short Zouave jacket, all of it being elaborately trimmed with a profusion of bright yellow and gold braid, twisting and turning about in grotesque patterns among the tortuous folds of the heavy material which tormented the royally apparelled, but uncomfortable wearers.

Curious looks, as well as questionable compliments, were directed to us as we rode through the streets, by the crowds of sullen-looking Moors. We arrived at the gates of the Palace and dismounted at the Bab-el-Bouget, where our animals were left in charge of the Makheznia of the outer guard. We ourselves were handed over to the Makheznia of the inner guard, who conducted us through numerous courtyards, until we came to an enormous gateway, round which lounged a crowd of what might be termed by their appearance—the Makheznia of the "Beggar Brigade." After some little delay the ponderous doors were swung back, and we passed into a large quadrangular court, to find the Sultan waiting to receive us.

His Majesty reclined on a sofa covered with yellow satin, a chair placed before him. He received me very graciously, shook hands, and begged me be seated. For some moments he honoured me with a piercing scrutiny. He must be near forty years of age, and enjoys robust health. His tendency to obesity had been somewhat overcome by his recent exertions in following, or flying from, the foe. His face is handsome, the forehead high, like his father's. The lower portion of his face is rather weak and sensual. His eyes are large and almond shaped and his gaze searching. The gentle air of self-indulgence which characterized him as I remember him at Marrakesh, is marred by a fearful and suspicious look, which at times flits across his features. It can easily be seen that Mulai Hafid suffers from the frightful fear of assassination. His hands and feet are beautifully kept and almost perfect in shape. His bulk suggests the corpulence of inactivity rather than physical strength. He looked tired, his eyes burned, and a hectic flush was on his cheeks. As he read my credentials his hands were shaking from the nervous tension he was labouring under. The anxiety was too much for him, and

at times he must have been bordering on a state of hysteria. One of the requests that I made during the interview was for permission to sketch. This he did not understand. Taking in his hand a drawing which I gave him out of my portfolio, he was anxious to know how I did it. The use of the camera was partly understood by reason of his brother's proficiency in the art of photography, but to make portraits with your hand! Well, he doubted it.

His surroundings conduced to make him suspicious of all, and he had faith in no one.

"How is it done? Show me," he said.

Quickly I made a sketch of the first thing that entered my head—a girl in a picture hat. This was a most unfortunate choice, for his Majesty had never seen a hat, and he was not at all impressed with the likeness of a female who was evidently displaying her face in what appeared to him to be a wanton manner. His doubts reasserted themselves. Could he trust me after all? Had I spoken the truth, or was I an impostor and my credentials false?

"Could you do my portrait?" he asked, with a searching look. He certainly thought he had caught me. In reality, it was just what



MULAI HAFID.
(Sketched at Fez.)

I had wished to do later on; but the opportunity could not be missed, and I set to work without delay. It was rather a nerve-racking ordeal, for during the sitting he carried on an exciting conversation, and on the success of the portrait depended whether I stayed in Fez, or whether I was sent away in disgrace. From time to time he impatiently regarded the progress of the work, wondering why it could not be finished in a few seconds, like the click of a camera shutter. When it was finished he called for his Hajib (literally "his eyebrow") to see it. The result was evidently quite satisfactory, for they both smiled, and were pleased as two babies would have been if they had been given a new toy. It was only by promising to do another later on, that it was returned to me, as the Sultan desired to retain it for his own delectation. However, some time afterwards, in performance of my promise, I did one in water-colour, and presented it to the Sultan, who was extremely gratified by the result of the "hand-magic of the N'zerani."

He was now quite satisfied with me, and commenced a long and animated conversation. He drank in eagerly all the news that I could tell him of the affairs of Europe and the happenings in the

coast towns of his own kingdom of Morocco, and then, with excited gestures, he poured forth his thoughts. His first words were, "Where are the French?" for he still feared that they were at his back. I assured him that they were at Casa-Blanca, at which he seemed quite relieved. He continued, "Why do not the English help me? They have always been friendly with Morocco. I have a letter from your Queen Victoria and the treaties made by your great nation with my father and grandfather. I can show them unto thee. Why do they not send an ambassador to my court? I wish it, and mean them well. Ah, they have made the *entente cordiale* and sold the Moors to France."

I discovered later that the political information which had filtered through various channels until it had reached his ears, came from the Arabic journals of Egypt. These are nearly all anti-European, and being the only news of the outer world that the Moors receive, do a great deal of harm in disseminating anti-Christian ideas. Most of the notables of Morocco (if they can read) are subscribers to these journals and firmly believe every word uttered by their co-religionists, as published in the Mohammedan papers of Egypt.

The few Europeans around Mulai Hafid had shown him the uncomplimentary remarks concerning him, that had appeared in the Continental press; this was a most unwise thing to have done, as to show the ruler of such a fanatic and cruel race these things, was to put their own lives in grave jeopardy, should he have taken distinct umbrage at anything said of him. It was in remembrance of some of these remarks that he turned to me and continued—

“Everywhere in Europe the papers call me a savage—a fanatic—a preacher of Holy war—that I have torn down the portraits of European monarchs and trampled them under foot, to show my people that I am anti-European! It is all lies! lies! You shall take my photo—you shall go with your camera everywhere and take photos of everything you wish—I will guard you. This will prove to them that I am not what they say. Do I not speak the truth?” I was astonished at his Majesty’s vehemence, and hardly knew how to answer him.

I did not feel called upon to discuss international politics, which were quite out of my province. The mention of France was as a red rag to a bull. As diplomatically as I could, I turned the subject.

He saw in my presence at Fez a chance to repudiate these accusations, and for this reason I was accorded a most cordial reception. His anxiety to hasten his recognition by the Powers, in order to be able to deal with his uncertain partisans with a free hand, made him treat me in a far more confidential and intimate manner than had ever previously been accorded to a European by a Moorish monarch.

“You must come and see me soon.” I replied that I intended leaving Fez in a few days’ time. “You must not go,” said the Sultan. “You must stay with me. I will appoint you my correspondent. You alone shall send all the news to the European papers.” I suggested that unless his gracious words were committed to writing, malicious people might presume to doubt the extent of his goodness to me.

“You shall have a letter,” said Mulai Hafid; and, calling a scribe, he ordered it to be prepared. It was sent to me in the course of the day. A copy is given on page 92.

“Stay in Fez,” his Majesty resumed. “You shall have a house, servants, animals, and food.”

At a word from him, the Hajib and Comptroller of the Household rose, and presently returned

with a large bag of money, which he laid at my feet. As delicately as possible I refused it. The Sultan was surprised.

"The Koran teaches us," said he, "that when a friend visits us, his expenses must be paid. Therefore you must accept the money." I explained that I could not. After some argument he rose and walked through a doorway into the great store, where the useless and costly lumber, so assiduously acquired by Abdul Aziz, was piled in reckless and fantastic confusion. Pianos, magic-lanterns, bicycles, gramophones, cameras, lamp-shades, mirrors, a steam-launch, two balloons, manicure sets, swords and saddlery, polo balls and sticks; there was no end to the extravagant display. Here and there were small piles of jewels and precious stones evidently got ready to send to Europe to raise money upon, to fill the depleted treasury. In one corner were large sacks filled with the most beautiful rubies. It is a veritable charnel house of the revenues of Morocco.

Mulai Hafid returned, bearing a beautiful dagger in a magnificently worked silver sheath. With a smile he presented it to me as a souvenir of the occasion. Before I left him, he arranged that I should come into the palace grounds on

PRAISE BE TO GOD ALONE.

*And there is no power and no strength
except in God the High and Great.*

TO THE MOST LEARNED AND ABLE CRITICS THE LEADERS OF THE
LONDON PAPERS.

With thanks to God, may He be ever exalted, and trusting you may have always good health and great prosperity for yourselves as well as your magnificent government, which is always so steadfast in friendship. We have received your letter through the hands of the intelligent representative Mr. Lawrence Harris, containing your kind expressions of sincere friendship which were addressed to His Majesty our Lord the Sultan, may God strengthen him. And after He had apprehended, may his grandeur last, and rejoiced over its kind words and sweet expressions, He commanded me, may God exalt him, to answer you categorically.

As to the above-mentioned representative he has joyfully arrived, and was received by His Majesty with favour and consideration, and he communicated to His Majesty, on your behalf, the messages with which he was commissioned of greetings and congratulations upon what God has bestowed upon him in confirming him on the Throne of the Greatest Caliphate. May those greetings return to you full of all the blessings you wish, and may you enjoy all happiness and dignity and greatness, and this is what we pray to God to bestow upon his servant.

As to your recommending the said representative, and your wish that he might be favoured by His Majesty and meet with distinguished treatment, our Lord (the Sultan) has granted him an interview which has pleased him, and He, may God preserve him, received all his news and information, and he was received as an intelligent and wise representative. As to recommending him, this has been done, and as a proof of his being thoroughly looked after His Majesty, may He be glorified, has appointed him as correspondent here to the intelligent Director of the journal "THE GRAPHIC," one of the three great papers; may he be preserved. Therefore all communications and correspondence and letters between both concerning the High Makhzan of Morocco, may it be exalted, should be communicated through him, without any other intermediary, and nothing will be published unless that which is authorised through the said correspondent. Anything published in another paper will not be taken into consideration as true. Therefore, the paper and its correspondent will be appointed without restriction.

As to your praising of those three papers, this is known to our Lord the Sultan, the Victorious by God, and it is sufficient honour for them to be under the rule and commands of His Majesty the exalted King Edward VII. May his reign endure. And may you be looked upon with consideration and honour and covered with glory and greatness, and finally this is the Sherifian command, may God prosper it, in the eleventh day of Ramadam, the great of the year 1326.

ABDALLAH EL-FÂSI

(Vizier for Foreign Affairs)

May God be kind to him.

The Director of the three London papers,
May his happiness last.

the following Friday (the Moorish Sabbath) and take a photo. of him on his way to the Mosque. Against my better judgment I consented to stay in Fez. Had I known then what I was destined to endure I should have quitted Fez that night. A cordial shake of the hand ended the first of a series of remarkable interviews.

Mulai Hafid's position was most uncertain. He was fully cognizant of the fact that the Moorish throne could no longer be held without its recognition by the European Powers. Acknowledged by a portion of his turbulent subjects as their Sultan, he was by no means firmly seated on the throne. Should he dare to move a hand to strengthen his position, then he foresaw he would be providing an excuse for the Powers to interfere. He feverishly waited for them to acknowledge him as the rightful Sultan of Morocco, and that he reigned by the lawful deposition of Abdul Aziz. He had even gone to the length of sending representatives to Europe to solicit their coveted approbations. Unfortunately the two most important countries—France and England—were in no hurry to recognize anybody, and had ignored his representatives. Germany had made a precipitate movement in

sending Dr. Vassel to Fez. This had given a little confidence to Mulai Hafid, but he was too suspicious, and Germany gained nothing by her mistake. The Egyptian newspapers instilled into his mind that England had sold Morocco to France, and he was doing all he could to put himself in the good graces of the British Government.

I had come to Fez with the intention of obtaining an interview and making a few sketches ; but, by the irony of fate, the Sultan, in his perplexity, was making use of me as European adviser. The position was not an enviable one. Had I been in telegraphic communication with England it would have been easier. But there are no telegraphs in the interior of Morocco. The transmission of news is uncertain, all communications are entrusted to couriers, who travel on foot from city to city, exposed to all the delays and dangers of the road.

I slowly walked through the courtyard of the palace, wondering what the morrow would bring forth and in what manner these strange complications would end. My musings were suddenly interrupted by a gentle touch on my shoulder. Lifting my eyes, I perceived the crowd of door-keepers, makheznia, and hangers-on, with palms

extended and an expectant leer on their ugly faces.

"Fabor! fabor!" they cried. In accordance with custom, I placed a piece of silver in each monkey-like paw. No thanks were tendered, each recipient turning his back on me with a muttered curse upon the Christian. At each gate the process was repeated, till my pockets were emptied, and I had nothing for the men in charge of the animals. However, they were not deterred. It in no way injured their dignity to trot beside me all the way to my house, where I bestowed the "backsheesh," which is practically their only pay.

The next day I moved into the house reserved by the Sultan for the Englishmen in Fez. This house, of two storeys, consisted of four large rooms looking on a central garden courtyard with a tank in the middle. The stable was just inside the entrance, and three smaller rooms were used for kitchen and offices. The tank is supplied by a system of earthenware pipes which run throughout the city. These conduct the water from the river at the northern, higher portion of the town, whence it flows through the houses and gardens to the lower end. This water is not wholesome after traversing the greater part of Fez. The

public abattoirs are built on the river bank. Dead animals are always to be found in it, their decaying bodies disseminating corruption throughout the city. Shortly after taking up my abode in this house we were all attacked with a most virulent type of boil, together with acute dysentery. We eventually discovered that the servants, too lazy to fetch the good rock water which is the drinking water of Fez, had supplied us from the tank.

The sanitary arrangements are of the crudest. Given a case of typhoid or cholera, the inhabitants of Fez stand in imminent danger of being swept out of existence. The drainage system, never good, has been allowed to fall to a most lamentable state of disrepair. It is infested with rats of a most repulsive variety. Large, fierce, and naked, with pink feet, they add yet another to the already lurid collection of the horrors of Fez.

One might live in the city for years and approach no nearer to an insight into the inner life of the people. The tall windowless houses and great walled gardens invite no confidences and disclose none. What happens inside the hidden recesses of those gloomy walls? At all hours of the day and night one hears rifle shots at

intervals. What do they mean? Is it that some light-hearted Moor is firing his gun in pure joyousness, or does the report ominously signify the final agonizing stage of some unguessed tragedy? Who can tell? Anything is possible in such a city.

The people in the street may not always turn and curse you as you pass, but the spirit of sullen hostility to the "accursed infidel" never sleeps. Sometimes their ferocious hatred flashes forth into hideous action, as the brutal murders of several Europeans of late years bear eloquent testimony. Such an instance is that of an unfortunate agent of an oil company, who was first hacked with knives and then taken to a shop and burnt alive.

CHAPTER VI

HAFID'S HAZARDOUS EXPERIMENT

Hadj Tahar Mokwar—Taking the photograph of the Sultan at a religious ceremony in the Palace—Dangerous attitude assumed by the crowd—Mulai Hafid anxious for England's help—Pertinent questions *re* Germany—Mulai Hafid shows me over the Palace—The Royal menagerie—Tiger and the sheep—The "Hajib" explains the interior of the Palace—Dr. Vassel—Ben Gebritt.

SHORTLY after being installed in my new quarters I received an invitation from Hadj Tahar Mokwar, the British native agent in Fez, to visit him. The interview did not convey to me a high impression of this official. In my opinion the Consulate at Tangier cannot be congratulated upon their choice of a representative. I found him lying upon a divan suffering from a prevalent disease. His face was wrinkled and seared with the imprint of a life spent in a city which has been called the most corrupt and immoral in the world. No one seems to know what his official duties are. He professed to have full powers as Consul, but his contention was not supported by the Consul-General in Tangier. That gentleman informed

me that Hadj Tahar Mokwar had no judicial powers whatever, and the Consulate is in no way responsible for his actions. He was but an agent in disputes between natives. In any case he is a "protected" Moor, and is beyond the power of the Makhzen. The Moors say he has an "itching palm." He is cordially hated by them. But if you catch him in any sharp practice he serenely quotes the proverb: "Ma' sha' A'llah, la budd in lkoom." ("What Gods wills cannot but be.")

He was most polite to me, as the word had gone round that I was in high favour with the Sultan. All Moors, and especially those in official positions, are nothing better than mean parasites. They cringe and fawn, or become insolent and aggressive in direct ratio to one's *locus standi* with their Sultan.

Mulai Hafid had begun to show his authority as Sultan, in dealing out sundry punishments to some of the tribesmen. Although not venturing too far, he found it necessary to display a strong hand, and already the Fasis were learning to respect him.

The feast of Ramadam is considered a dangerous time in Morocco. The strict fasting is



ROYAL VISIT TO THE MOSQUE.

(Sketched at Fez.)

conducive to fanning to a full blaze the smouldering flames of fanaticism and turbulence. As duly arranged, I went on the Friday to take a photograph of the Sultan as he came from the mosque. The occasion was strictly private, only high officials and the troops being present. To attend this function in the Palace grounds was a privilege never previously accorded to a European. It was a clever experiment of Mulai Hafid to test his power. Should I be torn to pieces by these fanatical Moslems, then he would know just how far to go with them; but if, on the contrary, I was unmolested and 'survived the ordeal, then not only would I have pictures to put in the English papers to prove his friendliness to Europeans, but it would also give him some confidence in his hold on his subjects.

The immense courtyard of the Palace was filled with the "true believers" who were waiting to acclaim the new Sultan who had taken the throne from a "trafficker with the N'zeranis." Only a few knew that I was present by the orders of Mulai Hafid himself. The minutes slowly passed and still the Sultan delayed his appearance. Angry looks were turned in my direction, ugly murmurings begun to arise and the few officials

who were around me, became anxious for my safety. Would the tension last until the Sultan came out and distracted the attention of the sullen mob?

The words "Accursed N'zerani" were spoken in louder tones—a movement like that of a wave of water on an expanse of sea was made in my direction, threats of my life were openly uttered, when the clear notes of a bugle announced the forthcoming of the Sultan. Every one rushed to his place. First through the doorway came the crowd of running men, then the Master of Ceremonies with his Rod of Office walked slowly in front of the Sultan, who was mounted on a white horse. The royal fly-catchers walked on each side waving their white cloths; a giant black slave held the royal parasol over his lord's head, followed by the Makheznia of the inner chambers making up the royal procession. A loud fanfare of trumpets gave the salute, at the sound of which the heads of all the spectators were bent to the ground in the presence of "The Victorious by God."

Mulai Hafid was very pale and made not a sign in answer to the acclamations of the onlookers. As he caught sight of me, he gave the very

slightest sign of recognition, to signify to the notables that I enjoyed his protection. In the centre of the courtyard a halt was made, and for a few moments a perfect silence reigned over the concourse of people assembled in the large open space. The rays of the sun, escaping from behind a fugitive cloud, shone down on the white robed figures with heads and hands raised to heaven, as the Sultan in a sonorous voice, called the blessing of the Faith: "A'llah Akbar, A'llah Akbar." "God is Great. There is no God save God, and Mahomet is His Prophet. Come to the prayer, Come to do good! A'llah Akbar! There is no God save God." The solemn call, taken up by the assembled troops, was the signal for all the mosques of the city; as the cavalcade slowly continued its way, the sound could be heard as it went from mosque to mosque and was lost in the distance. As the Sultan disappeared through the white archway of the royal mosque I was warned to get back to my house without delay.

Mulai Hafid's experiment was a success, but it was too dangerous to repeat it. After this he sent for me almost every day. He soon dropped all formalities, and would sit and chat, or would

walk in the gardens of the Palace with me, telling me his troubles and seeking my advice. On one occasion, in a lovely garden in the cool of the evening, he became very confiding. "Tell me," he said, "do you think the Powers will delay in recognizing me as the Sultan of Morocco?" This was a question which put me in a corner, as I had no means of seeing any recent European paper dealing with the Moroccan question in order that I might judge of the trend of events at the Courts of the Powers concerned, in dealing with the diplomatic matters in Fez, and therefore, I waited for the Sultan's next remarks before replying.

He continued, "I cannot see their reasons for any delay. I admit that at first they had cause to mistrust me, for I had to proclaim war on my brother—but I never did proclaim a Holy war. As soon as I could get to Fez, I did all in my power to quieten the tribes and bring peace on my country. I also sent to the Diplomatic Corps in Tangier accepting the terms of the Algeciras Conference. They are drawing up a Franco-Spanish Note for my consideration. When it arrives you must come to me and give me your advice as to how I shall act in regard to it.

“Surely they can see that I am well disposed towards Christians, and especially Englishmen. If England would only help me, I should be willing to put myself in her hands entirely. I have plainly shown this, in my first appointments of Europeans round my person. When the two Englishmen came to Fez and asked for posts under my Government, I dismissed the Frenchmen and the German who were acting as my ‘harabas’ (military instructors) and put them in their place. An English doctor came; I appointed him as my physician and did not ask any questions. Germany sent me Dr. Vassel, and recognized me as Sultan; but I should have preferred England to have done this instead of that country. Now, tell me—what do you think of Dr. Vassel, and why did Germany send him?”

These questions put to me so plainly, placed me in a quandary, and I had some difficulty in answering them in case I endangered my relations with the Sultan on the one hand, or that he might think I occupied some official position and my replies and statements got quoted to the natives as representing the views of England, which would lead to international

complications if carried back to Tangier and from thence got published in the European papers; therefore I had to frame my replies in as diplomatic a manner as possible.

These questions were succeeded by others concerning the French and their ultimate designs in Morocco. This was a very dangerous subject, as Mulai Hafid was most antagonistic and his remarks very bitter. The French representative—Ben Gebritt—had an extremely difficult task to perform when he was sent to Fez, and his ultimate success in inducing the Sultan to accept his proposals was mainly due to my influence with Mulai Hafid, and my endeavours in getting that monarch to deal with the desires of the French Government in a proper spirit. Mulai Hafid spoke with delight about the Casa-Blanca incident of September 25th, when the deserters from the French Army were protected by the Germans.

“They will go to war about it, I am sure,” he said. “I have been assured that Germany is stronger than France, her army is bigger and better, and she will win.” This was said with such evident satisfaction that I refrained from making any remark.

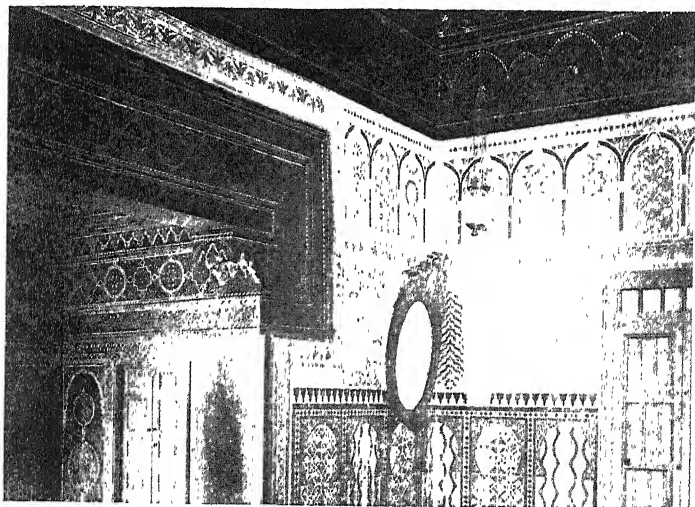
Not having any confidence in the news obtained by his own officials, he commissioned me secretly to send special couriers, to obtain all the information that was possible. Calling the Hajib, he ordered him to admit me to the Palace and to his presence immediately I appeared at the gate, at all times, without exception.

“Now, come with me,” he said, “and I will show you the Palace.” The Palace, with its gardens, is most extensive and enclosed by several miles of immense walls. Preceded by the Hajib and one attendant, we slowly walked through immense rooms practically devoid of any furniture. The floors were entirely formed of beautiful mosaic, designed in the most intricate patterns conceivable. The walls in some of these rooms were simply white-washed, and had a three-foot dado of blue Fez tiles. One room in particular was a most beautiful sight; it was quite ninety feet long by sixty in width and about thirty in height. There was not a wall ornament or a piece of furniture in any part of this immense chamber, but every inch of it was covered with most marvellous designs, fashioned of millions of

small tiles—the predominating colour being a rich, bronzy blue. The ceiling was a series of very large wooden beams arranged in complicated geometrical designs—the entire surface being painted in red, yellow, green, and gold, making endless and bewildering patterns so cunningly executed and shaded that the columns and lines seemed alive—twisting and turning as one moved about the room. The fifteen-feet horse-shoe doors, of white plaster picked out in delicate lace-like decoration, take years to complete. Richly coloured and thick-piled carpets were on the floors; these helped to throw up the glorious tints of the mosaic work. Emerging from the buildings of the Palace, we were taken into the gardens and led along devious paths until the roar of some wild beast, quite close by us, gave me a sudden start. Turning a sharp corner, we were shown, in cages similar to those at the Zoological Society's Gardens in Regent's Park, some of the most beautiful lions and tigers I have ever seen—either wild or in captivity. Their coats were marvellously sleek, the markings of the tigers being especially well-defined, and all the animals were giants of their kind.



THE MENAGERIE IN THE PALACE AT FEZ.



CORNER OF A ROOM IN THE PALACE.

Mulai Hafid was as pleased as any schoolboy ; from cage to cage he went, speaking to and teasing the lovely creatures.

"What do you think of them?" he asked. I duly replied that they were fit for a Sultan's Palace and gave the crowning touch to his splendid gardens.

"Wait," said he, "and I will show you something good for thine eyes to feast upon." And he forthwith gave a whispered order to Hajib, and soon a live sheep was brought. I naturally thought that they were going to kill the sheep, cut it up, and feed the animals. But, to my astonishment, the sheep was not killed, and, struggling and bleating, it was thrust alive into the cage of a fine tiger. The sight was most nauseating, and I had to turn my head away. As I did so I caught sight of Mulai Hafid. Such a cruel look of enjoyment I had never before seen on a human face ; with glistening eyes and open mouth he thoroughly enjoyed the horrid spectacle, as the poor sheep was rent to pieces by the hungry tiger.

We quitted the menagerie, and I was quite relieved when the Sultan, with many apologies, left me in charge of the Hajib, who was

instructed to take me round and tell me all about the internal arrangements of the Palace. The Hajib was a short, monkey-like individual. Of low degree, he had been appointed to this most important office only temporarily, until Mulai Hafid was more secure on the throne. He was a confirmed hater of all Christians, and did not relish the task of making himself agreeable to me. However, his Master's will must be obeyed, and, with ill-concealed reluctance, he led me to a pavilion in the gardens, where he ordered slaves to bring tea, which he excused himself of partaking as it was the time of Ramadam. Whilst I was sipping my tea, he told me a little (as little as he could) of the servants of the Palace, although he embellished what he did say, with the flowery language, and a host of titles to myself, which is the usual Oriental custom.

It appeared that the Hajib is the High Chamberlain and the head of the four bodies of the inner service of the Palace, viz. the "Moualin-el-oudhou" (men of the bath), the "Moualin-ettai" (men of the tea), the "Moualin-el-frach" (men of the bed), and the "Moualin-essijada" (men of the mat). The "Moualin-el-oudhou"



THE SULTAN MULAI HAFID AND HIS FLY-CATCHERS.

These fly-catchers are special slaves whose duty it is to run beside the Sultan and flap large linen cloths to prevent the flies approaching the "Chosen of God."

are fifty picked negro slaves reared in the Palace, and are the Ushers of the Imperial Chamber. The "Moualin-ettai" are ten negro slaves, in two divisions of five each, "men of the tea" and "men of the water." They have an apartment reserved to themselves, and make the Imperial tea; the "men of the water" procure and distil the water from special wells, and hand the pots of tea to the negresses who serve in the private apartments of the Sultan. The "Moualin-el-frach" are twenty in number, and are not slaves, but are chosen from the Makhzen tribes, and have a hereditary right to the office; their care is to prepare the Royal tent and carry the "praying-carpet" of their Sovereign, when he attends prayer at the Mosque. The "Moualin-essijada" are the highest in grade, and, as Grooms of the Chamber, are nearly always related to the Monarch; each day, one is appointed for the special duty of carrying the praying-mat and placing it in the desired position. The "Moqqedin" are attached to this important body of officials, and their duty is to reckon out and announce the hours of prayer.

The "Harem" is quite a distinct portion of the Palace, and my fanatical companion would

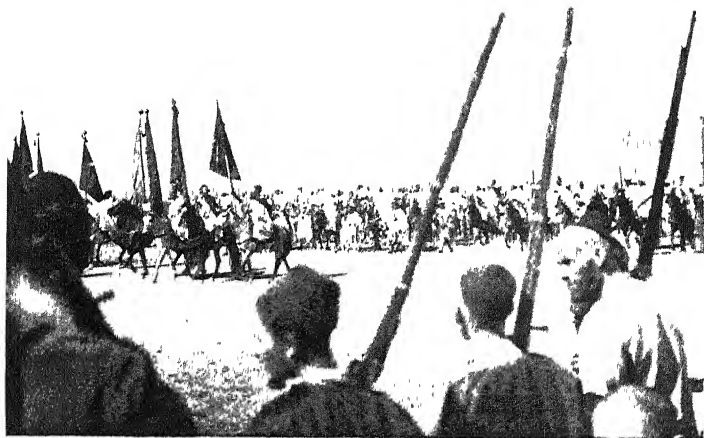
not speak to a N'zerani concerning it. Later on, my servant Absolem gave me all the information I required, when we visited the Sultan at that place.

When the Hajib had told me this much, he yawned, and I could see that he was heartily disgusted at having been forced to talk to an infidel, so I took my departure. As I left the outer gate I met Dr. Vassel and Ben Gebritt, who had been waiting patiently for hours, for an interview with the Sultan. These two representatives had a most unprofitable, as well as thankless task, and I did not envy them their hard lot.

Dr. Vassel is a very charming gentleman, of a most retiring disposition. He did not at all relish the publicity which this affair gave him. His position was an awkward one, no doubt, but I hardly think he was the right man to deal with the difficulties which arose. The mistake in sending him to Fez at the wrong time had to be supported with a good deal of "bluff." When the reaction came, German prestige suffered the more, by reason of the fall from the lofty position assumed. The blundering of Germany's policy became more evident as time went on.



BEN GEBRITT.



THE SACRED BANNERS OF REZ.

Violent, when conciliation would have sufficed, weak, when dignified firmness should have been employed. On the other hand, Ben Gebritt was peculiarly fitted for his task. Originally a Cadi in Algeria, he was sent to Morocco, where he acted as interpreter for seventeen years to the French Legation. During that period he had been sent on many missions of importance. An officer of the Légion d'Honneur, and Officier de L'Instruction Publique, he had the additional advantage of being a Mohammedan. Arabic also is his native tongue, which counts much more than may be supposed. Despite this, he told me that for a month after his arrival in Fez he had a most miserable time. This lasted till Mulai Hafid had reconsidered his attitude towards France.

The political situation at this moment had reached a crisis. Very strained relations existed between France and Germany and the latter, to all appearances, was striving to complicate matters in Morocco.

Two highly placed diplomats so far forgot themselves as to quarrel in a dining-room of a Tangier Hotel. The unrestrained language used savoured more of the *café* than the corps

diplomatique. The conduct of these gentlemen on this occasion is a sufficiently luminous commentary upon the tension existing between their respective Governments.

Germany was watching with a very jealous eye every movement that France made. The latter country had Abdul Aziz under her protection at Casa-Blanca, and was most surprised when Mulai Hafid was proclaimed Sultan. The mere fact of Dr. Vassel going to Fez, seemed like playing into her hands. "Let Germany make friends with the Pretender at Fez, we have the real Sultan at Casa-Blanca under our care;" and certainly this would have been the case if only a few feeble straws, in the form of some Englishmen, had not changed the course of events.

The proclamation of Mulai Hafid as Sultan was not sufficient for him to have kept the position for long, without the semblance of European recognition. The Englishmen arriving at Fez, he diplomatically gave them appointments at once. Dr. Vassel's arrival, too, was another source of support, and when the journalists gave long interviews (many of them fictitious) with the Sultan, in the European papers, his cause gained additional strength, until at

last his seat on the throne was something like secure. Left to himself, it is more than doubtful whether he could have maintained the position he assumed.

Now it was seen that at Casa-Blanca was only the shadow of a Sultan—the substance was at Fez. At once, Ben Gebritt, the most capable man for the delicate mission, was sent to counteract the influence of the German representative. Mulai Hafid did his best to embroil the two countries in warfare, which he thought would save him from the French—his greatest fear.

CHAPTER VII

FEZ

Saints by the roadway—Panorama of the city—Sketching dangerous—
Hills of cement—Pious foundations—Murder of Europeans—
University of Karaouiyn—Students' life—Sultan of the Tolba.

My constant visits to the Palace accompanied by the Makheznia of the Sultan had familiarized the Fasis with my appearance. The sight of the brown leather portfolio, in which I carried my papers, was sufficient for gossips to gather and speculate on my identity.

“Surely he must be a ‘Bashadaw’ to go so often to our ‘Seedna;’” and much respect was shown as our little cavalcade pushed its way through the motley crowd. Invitations from the notables anxious to ingratiate themselves with the “favourite” came every day. The visits to these houses were most curious and enjoyable; but it was with Abdallah ben Mokta I spent most of my time. There I met many

strange characters and gleaned much useful information.

The Mohammedan sabbath is on a Friday, but business is generally continued after the midday prayer. The previous day is the real day of rest and the Makhzen is closed. On Thursdays, Abdallah would send for me, either for a ride round Fez, or to spend the day in company with his friends, listening to their interesting talk.

On this Thursday, Abdallah accompanied Hardwick and myself for our first ride round the city. Mounted on mules we proceeded in single file through the narrow crowded streets. A negro slave preceded us to clear the way with continual shouts of "Balek! Balek"! Large wooden gates, which are shut at night, are at almost every turning. Fez consists of several small towns—or, more properly speaking, wards—each with its own gates. It is one heterogeneous mass of buildings, gardens, walls, and steep, stony, narrow ways.

Through the crazy streets we went. "Balek! Balek!" "Now how shall we get by this lot?" I wondered. Not twenty yards away, were huge piles of dried twigs coming straight at us.

It was not till a closer view revealed the little thin legs of a donkey underneath the prickly loads, that our wonder ceased at this strange sight. "Balek! Balek!" Our rascal Moussa, the slave, pushed the piles aside. With one shoulder scraped by the rough wall and the other torn by the thorns, we tore our way past the obstacle. The diminutive animals, overbalanced by their tremendous burdens, are pulled into upright positions before they can continue their obstructive way. Hardly were we through this tangle when "Balek! Balek!" and down the street, on a fine black horse, a huge negro slave, one of the Sultan's guards, galloped at full pelt, paying no regard to the curses levelled at him as his horse splashed up the mud and filth in the faces and over the white clothes of the pedestrians. With a clatter he passed us, but how he fared when he got to the donkeys with their loads—A'llah only knows! We passed through Bou-Jeloud and into the better streets of Fez-el-Djedid. Little half-naked gamins stared with round eyes at the N'zeranis, and one little hopeful of about three years of age spat out and called after us, "May God strike you to the ground—accursed ones." Near

the Bab-Seegma several "saints" sat by the roadside in their several degrees of saintliness. One was entirely naked and ate sand, calling on devotees to testify his holiness by punching his stomach, which was as hard as stone. Another was hideous with blood flowing from numerous wounds over his body, made with broken bottles. As we approached, they greeted us with vituperation and curses, calling on all true believers to kill the Christians. The most saintly of all was an old white-haired saint, whose home was a dirtheap by the roadside. His thin naked body was bare, except for a rope of wooden beads three inches thick hanging round his neck. Abdallah explained that this was the most saintly man in Fez. Never did he quit the dirtheap, and from time immemorial knew not the luxuries of a bath. We were greeted by this most holy man with a string of well-chosen sentences. "May the true God blast your lives, O Christians," "May the bones of the unbelievers rot in their graves," etc., etc.; at the same time an emaciated arm was stretched out and a long bony hand deftly caught a small coin I threw down. "May thy grandmother's bones rot in hell," quoted the sweet old chap as

he clutched the coin, and such-like charming phrases followed us till we were out of hearing.

Then we reached the outskirts of the city which disclosed some really beautiful scenes.

Fez lies snugly ensconced in a hollow of the hills, which tower up many hundreds of feet to the east and west of the city. Its greatest length (about four miles) is from north to south. The city slopes gently from the great northern gate, the Bab-el-Khorbib, down to the older part of the town, which lies to the south, and is known as "Old Fez." "New Fez" contains the Sultan's palace, with its extensive gardens, which extend for miles, and the large beautiful houses of the wealthier Moors. The old town is the commercial city and the residence of the middle classes, merchants, and artisans. Large gardens occupy the slope which lies at the foot of the eastern wall and the Fez river. These gardens are thickly planted with oranges, pomegranates, figs, olives, and other indigenous fruit trees, while rows of stately poplars add beauty to the scene. Little streams of water trickling hither and thither ensure the freshness and evergreen appearance to the verdure which is not the least of its charms. The high yellow or grey

stone walls which surround the gardens—moss-grown and crumbled in places—form a fitting setting to the emerald jewels they so jealously guard. The roughly-cobbled, narrow lanes between the gardens, twist and turn in every direction. Ever and anon they cross miniature stone bridges spanning the stream, which roams and tumbles over its rocky bed below. This stream runs parallel with the roadway. The water supply is drawn from the river, which tumbles in rocky cascades from the northern end of the city down to the southern portion of the town. Earthenware pipes are laid on to the houses, the tanks being filled by gravity. There is a very large head of water, and perhaps some day, this little river will supply the power to light up the city with electric lamps, and run the innumerable flour mills which abound in Old Fez. This water is not drinkable, at least by Europeans. On three occasions I have seen a dead mule—swollen and loathsome—poised on the rocks while the water ran over it in little cascades. The public abattoirs are merely platforms built over the banks of the river, and contribute their quota of refuse, which mingles with the other nastinesses with which the river is already

charged. There are, however, several large wells in the city which supply cool, clear, spring water, which is the only drinkable water to be had. Every morning a mule is laden with "breddas" and a good day's supply of fresh water is brought. At one point on the route, a huge viaduct crosses both stream and roadway. The ancient stonework is hung with moss and creepers; small plants, covered with brilliant blossoms, somehow find sustenance in the rents between the stones. The castellated parapet outlined sharply against the azure blue of the sky, flecked here and there with fleecy cloudlets, takes one back to other lands. It requires almost an effort to recall that one is in Morocco—the "Sunset Land," it is true, but a land of brooding suspicion and fierce and fanatical prejudice.

The true state of the case is, however, apparent if one produces a camera (sketching is altogether out of the question at present). To get a photograph at all, it is essential to conceal the camera as much as possible, and secure the picture with little ostentation. You are regarded with lowered brows and muttered curses, but open hostility is prevented by the fact that Mulai Hafid has threatened to tear in pieces any one who assaults

a European. This doubtless deters the gentle Moor from practising those little refined attentions to which his nature is inordinately prone.

Proceeding further we came to a curious three-way bridge, where three separate roads, at widely divergent angles, meet over the centre of the stream. Crossing the bridge, we climb the heights to the east and look down upon the panorama of Fez, with its mosques, palaces and gardens. It stretches as far as the eye can reach to each side of us. With the background of the western hills this forms one of the loveliest vistas of a truly oriental city that the world can show. At our feet are dotted little vegetable gardens, stocked to overflowing with their produce of melons, grapes, vegetables and fruits of all kinds which thrive in this rich soil. At various places on the banks of the stream one notes excavations where brick-making is in progress. Over the hills to our left, a herd of cattle trails slowly home after their day's grazing on the fertile slopes. A string of camels, with their loads of country produce—straw, grain, or what not, pass us silently and reflectively on their way to the city gate. So peaceful is the scene, it is hard to believe that this apparently slumbering Oriental

city is seething with the fierce fanaticism, which belongs by right more to the time of the Crusades than to the commencement of the twentieth century.

Our return to the city was over hills of pure cement. In no way is this precious stuff used by the natives, and lucky will be the first man to get a concession which will include this mine of wealth.

After passing through the Fondak-el-Jehudi we made a long detour. Care had to be taken to avoid the sacred streets where a saint's house stands. Abdallah explained that we must never go out without a guide till we knew Fez well. For should a N'zerani by accident pollute a saint's house by his presence, then his blood only could wash away the sacrilege. So much care is taken to prevent this, that big wooden bars are put across such streets as approach the sacred edifices, most especially that of Mulai Edriss. In fact as we neared these streets, black looks were turned towards us and fiercely we were ordered back.

A little later we were lounging on soft cushions in the beautiful garden of Abdallah. The birds twittered on the orange trees overhanging the limpid fountain pool in the centre. A golden

fruit disturbed by the songsters would splash into the water and sprinkle us with the cool spray. Who would think that this peaceful scene was surrounded by such as we had just passed through? "Come, Abdallah," I cried, "tell us all about your Fez, and its saints and customs; I have been in many parts of Morocco, but Fez is the most interesting."

Our friend settled his ample figure comfortably on three cushions placed by us, and said, "I am gratified that Our sacred City hath interested you, O my friend, and with the mercy of God I will tell you much concerning it. Bis'millah.

"More than a thousand years ago, the holy Edrissites came from Egypt to Morocco and founded the city of Oualily which you passed on the hill as you came to Fez. The second Edriss had so many followers flock to him, that a larger city was required, and his minister, Omair-ben-Mossab-el-Azdy, chose the site for Fez. The river Fez ran through the centre dividing the el-Karaouiyn bank from the el-Andalous bank. Many thousands of Moors expelled from Spain settled here, and the Jews were allowed to live at that spot called the Fondak-el-Jehudi.

"At one time the two quarters were walled

round and made two distinct cities. Fierce wars were carried on between the two halves, till the inner walls were razed by the Almohads and it became one city.

“Fez has now perhaps more than one hundred thousand inhabitants, but we are not certain, for we like not to count the people. The men of Fez are much superior to the other people of Morocco, and more refined. The other Moroccans ape our superior refined manner.”

Here Hardwick whispered in my ear, “What a conceited old rogue !”

Abdallah, not understanding English, probably took this interruption for a compliment.

With a smile to Hardwick he continued.

“Yes, my friends, it was the will of Allah the One, and Mahomet His Prophet, that the prayer of Mulai Edriss was granted. For when that holy man laid the first stone of Fez, he cried aloud, ‘Grant, O my God, that this place may be the abode of science and wisdom ; grant that as long as this city exists, the people may remain faithful to Thy name.’

“God in his wisdom has blessed us, and we are His most faithful followers. The Fasis think but of prayer, and the days and nights

are not divided by hours, but by the times for prayer.

“Many years ago a good man being sick unto death dreaded the silence of the night, and founded the ‘companions of the sick.’ They are ten muezzin, whose duties are hereditary. Through the night they succeed each other every half hour in the recitation of prayer and their voices are familiar to all of us. Thus at any time during the night the hour is known by the voice of the muezzin. Our religion predominates all other considerations, and our lives to the smallest detail are controlled by it.

“We are jealous of our institutions and like not them to be defiled by the N’zeranis. Do you remember that white wall standing alone outside the Bab-el-Seegma? It was there that a Christian spat as he passed a saint. A week after his body was found in the river. This was but two or three years ago, and therefore I counsel you both to be careful when you go out alone in the streets of Fez.

“The true governors of Fez are the Cadis or religious heads, and the administration of the city is maintained by the Habous funds. These provide also public instruction. Besides

the ordinary schools, is the Karaouiyn University, the largest mosque in Fez and the principal seat of learning in the Mogreb. It is said that many years ago, students from all parts of the world came here to study, and there are still the remains of a once celebrated library. But my son, who is a student there, tells me, that at times a text book is read out to be copied, but no more books are lent out, as so many were not returned. The Karaouiyn is also a caravanserai and a sanctuary. Here can stay the poor traveller who cannot pay to go to the fondaks, and here the refugee is safe from even the Sultan himself. No one dare violate the Sanctuary of Mulai Edriss. It is not expensive to be a student. Praise be to A'llah, I can afford to buy my son a key of a room and give him all he requires; but the poorer students live cheerfully on public charity until they have passed their courses and from a simple 'tolba' become professors of the fifth class. Then as officials under the Habous they receive at the time of festivals a 'silla' from the Makhzen, that is, a sum of money, a suit of clothes, with a mouna of grain and wheat."

Abdallah then related the curious custom of the Sultan of the Tolba and the origin of it. To both

Hardwick and me it sounded very much like a variation of the story of Ali Baba and the forty thieves ; but I give it as it was told me.

It appears that about three or four hundred years ago Mulai er-Rechid, with an eye on the palace of his brother and on a certain charming lady therein, did gather up his clans and march on Fez. At that time the pass of Taza was held by old Ben Michael, a rich and wily old Jew, who had considerable influence in all the Djebel.

Rechid was too poor to bribe, and too weak to force, the holder of the pass. In his trouble the students of Angad offered their help. Forty of them were closed up in boxes and sent to Ben Michael on the Sabbath. Suspecting nothing, the cases were taken into the house to await till the Sabbath was passed before they could be opened. As soon as it grew dark, out came the tolba, killed Ben Michael and led in Mulai er-Rechid. As a reward for this service, it was declared that each year there should be a Sultan of the Tolba. Unto this day, the students of Fez, on the first days of April, set up the ephemeral sovereignty.

As the gala time approaches, tents are requisitioned from the Grand Vizier, and on the banks of the river Fez outside the town, the camp is

pitched. To supply the indispensable, deputations are sent to collect subscriptions from the principal inhabitants. To the Kaid and Viziers a special letter is sent in the following terms :—

“To our devoted servant Kaid —— : I inform you that Our Lord Sultan, ‘the Victorious by God,’ has authorized us to celebrate the customary Feast, as it has been celebrated under his ancestors. Mighty vessels have been prepared for the preparation of the viands and dispositions have been made for a worthy celebration of the said feasts. So we desire of you to lose no time in paying us the subscription that has been given by your forefathers a thousand years before the creation of Adam. If you conform with our request all will be well ; but if you do not, we will send out against you, our victorious armies of fleas and bugs, which will keep you from sleeping in your bed. Pay up speedily !!”

The week is spent in much innocent fun, and a good number of Fasis come and enjoy the gaiety of the tolba during the gala week.

Before the camp breaks up, the real Sultan generally visits the camp, where, after a jesting dialogue between the two Sultans, the student throws himself at his sovereign’s feet and hands

him the petition, in which are enumerated the favours he solicits.

These are granted and the feast is over.

The position of Sultan of the Tolba carries with it real advantages, in the fact that he has the right to claim some favour for himself and family, the liberation of an imprisoned relative, exemption from taxes, etc., etc., and his petition is invariably granted in full.

Before taking our leave of Abdallah we expressed the hope that one day he would see his son Sultan of the Tolba.

"Yes," he said with a smile, "but to-morrow at the Bab-el-Bouget, you will see a terrible thing happen to one of the most popular Sultans of the Tolba that Fez has ever seen."

"What is that?" I asked.

"To-morrow will be punished Ali Mohammed, for writing seditious letters to Mulai Mohammed."

"Good night! A'llah imassee-kum ala" ("God make your evening with prosperity").

CHAPTER VIII

HAFID'S CRUEL PUNISHMENTS

El Hadj's story of Mohammed—Burning of the village—His adoption—Meets the ill-fated Mulai Mohammed—His faithfulness to his Prince causes his downfall—Mulai Mohammed "the one-eyed"—Brought to Fez in chains—Fearful punishment of the Sheik of the Zowia.

ON reaching our house we found El Hadj in a state of great excitement.

"Hast thou heard the news, Sidi?" he exclaimed.

"No; what is it? Take the animals to the stables and come back and tell me," I said.

While he was gone, we had a refreshing dip in the pool in the garden, donned our thin d'jellabas, lay on our camp beds, and watched the twinkling stars in the dark sky. Outside the door, Absolem was busy blowing up the small charcoal fire to make some tea. Occasionally he would stop to chase the rats, disporting themselves among the plants in the garden in great numbers.

The tea made, he placed the tray in front of us, and with a solemn face, said, "I fear, Sidi, that El Hadj has been much enjoying himself in Fez and has taken to smoking much 'keef.' Ah! Here he comes—look at his eyes. Tell him it is not good, for it clouds the brain and makes men mad."

With heavy footsteps El Hadj came in the room and squatted down without a word.

"Hallo! What's up, man? You were all on fire just now. Have you been taking too much 'keef'?"

At the word "keef" his eyes brightened. "Sidi," he said, "it is long since I came to Fez, and Fez is a fine city; if I have enjoyed myself, it is excusable. I have had much 'keef'; but it is good and makes one dream. Allow me to have one more pipe, and I will tell you the news and the story of Ali Mohammed."

"No! tell me without the keef," I said.

"Sidi, I promise I will smoke no more of it; but this once I must, or I cannot collect my thoughts."

Anxious to hear the story, I gave my consent. Filling the small bowl with the insidious hemp seed, he lighted it and drew the soothing smoke

down into his lungs. For a few moments he said not a word and his eyes became glazed and dreamy. Then, putting the pipe away, he commenced in a subdued voice.

It was a strange sight; this grizzled man squatting on the mat, his face dimly seen in the uncertain light of a flickering candle, his voice coming as from one in a dream, accompanied by the squeaking and screeching of the rats in the garden outside.

“What is our country coming to? We thought Mulai Hafid was all we wanted. But what has he done? Defiled our sanctuaries. Dragged Ali Mohammed from sanctuary, and to-morrow he is to be publicly punished. He, a Sheik! A'llah! A'llah! But in all my wanderings I come back to see this same old story of oppression in my country. The story of Ali is typical for this, my country. I see it all before mine eyes!”

The drug had taken hold on the old man. He seemed to be unaware of our presence, as with staring eyes and pointing fingers he told the story, as he knew it, and saw it, once more, before his eyes.

“Wahli! Wahli; it is written, and as it is written, so it shall be, Bismillah!”

“There is a little village snugly placed on the gentle slope of the hill. The brilliant light of the moon makes hard shadows on the ground. All is quiet—too quiet. A few sulking jackals prowl around unheeded. Two or three shrinking pariah dogs wander aimlessly about, seemingly without the heart to drive them away, or to warn their masters with their sharp fierce yelp. Alas! their masters are stretched stark and stiff among the embers of their ruined homesteads. A few bare poles and some smouldering remnants of thatch are all that remain to mark the site of a once prosperous village. Why is this? But a few hours since, a party of Kabyles swooped down without warning—a short deadly scrimmage, the men of the village were shot down and the women borne shrieking away. The callous moon, enthroned in the star-sprinkled heavens, gazed down, cold and unmoved, upon the scene of desolation.

“By the charred remains of a hut sat a round-eyed naked child, sobbing. He was tired, cold, and hungry. None answered his plaintive calls. Again he turned to the dark figure stretched upon the ground, idly gazing upon the ragged hole in the forehead. He understood not that

the cruel bullet had deprived his father of the power of answering him. At length, overcome with weariness and misery, he nestled into the blood-stained folds of his father's d'jellaba and composed himself to sleep."

For a moment El Hadj drooped his head, and we marvelled how the "keef" had killed the "animal" in him and made the Arab poetical nature predominant. Words and expressions that in ordinary circumstances never passed his lips, were brought forth under the influence of the insidious drug. Hardwick, myself, and even Absolem, sat in intense silence eagerly awaiting the continuation of this account of life in the Mogreb. Slowly, and with the same far-away look, our narrator continued—

"God the Great and the One God willed it and it was so! The boy slept with his dead father.

"When the sun had risen a trembling figure crept from its hiding-place beneath a heap of tibbing and looked fearfully around. It was Zulika, the wife, or rather the widow, of the headman of the village. Her lord and master was dead, her home destroyed, yet, with the stoical philosophy of our race, and her knowing 'As it was written, So it shall be,' she sent a few

curses in the direction of the raiders and accepted the position. 'In'shallah,' she said, 'I will journey to my own people in the Zowia. A'llah Akbar! Mashallah! God is Great. It is the will of God.'

"Gathering up a few necessary articles and some food, she turned to quit the scene of the tragedy, one of the many which occur in the dominion of our Lord the Sultan—the 'Chosen of God.' As she passed the blackened ruins, she came upon the child, who, just awakened, was again calling in vain upon his father. She stooped and comforted the child. 'Come,' she said, 'do not call your father, he is in Paradise. Come with me.' Tearing a portion from the dead man's d'jellaba, she wrapped it round the little brown figure. 'We must go away from here,' she told him, 'or those sons of pigs will return and kill us!'

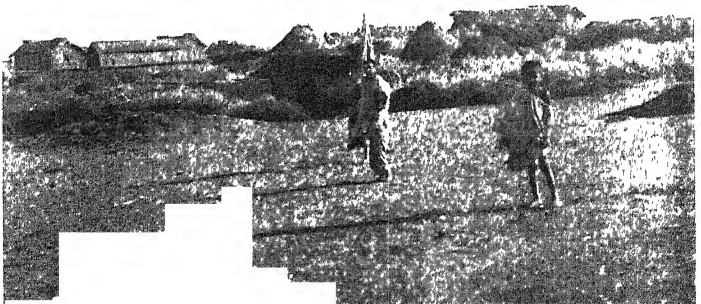
"The boy placed his hand in hers, and together they went out from the ruins. Over the plains and mountains, through the desert, even as did Hagar with her son Ishmael of blest ancestry. A'llah, who watches all things, watched over our poor Zulika and her fosterling. A month or so later, a woman, reduced almost to a skeleton, tottered

into her native village, carrying an emaciated child in her arms. Thus entered into this small village of the Zowia, Mohammed Abdul Lowi, who in after years became the Sheik of their principal mosque.

“At that time we were in the village, and I remember how the people left us performing our tricks, to go and crowd round the poor wanderers. For reasons that I know not, we stayed some years in that village. The fosterling grew up into a sharp and clever boy, and often in company with two little girls, we were sent to tend the flock of goats on the hillside. I began to love him as a brother, and when my father quitted the place, I cried bitterly at the separation from the only boy companion I ever had. In our wanderings as acrobats, we stayed not long at places, and little opportunity had I to play with, or become acquainted with, the other children. The long stay at this village enabled me to play as other children play, and, 'a stranger in the village like myself, this boy and I became as brothers. For years I heard nothing of him after I left. Then I saw Hassem the goatherd at Rabat and he told me news of my friend-brother. He told me how he had grown up strong and clever, and how the



SI ABDALLAH EL-FASI (FOREIGN MINISTER)
AND HIS SECRETARY AND CHIEF MESSENGER.



headman of the village at last allowed him to accompany a caravan to Fez, the Great Mecca of the West. There he found an uncle who kept a shop in the bazaar. Then, as you know, I went to America and heard no more till to-day."

Here the eyes of El Hadj blazed up and the dreamy recitative tone changed into bitter eloquence. "Yes, Sidi! It was to-day I heard that a Sheik had been torn from the Sanctuary, and that Sheik—was Mohammed Abdul Lowi. At the prison they let me see him after I had paid well those in charge. Through a hole in the door he was allowed to speak to me. He knew me once more, and told me all, and why this had happened. 'Thou must know, O Hadj! my beloved brother,' he said, 'that when I came to Fez, for years I worked for my uncle; but God willed it, I became a student at the Karouiyin. One year when I became Sultan of the "tolba"—Mulai Hassan, as you know is the custom, came to see me with his retinue. Among them was Mulai Mohammed, his eldest son. This prince was pleased to favour me with his regard and by his influence I have risen.'

" ' Abdallah-el-Fasi at that time was my companion at Karouiyin University. He also

shared the favour of our prince ; but he deserted the cause of his benefactor. He became Kartib, the official preacher to Abdul Aziz. Now he has deserted him and is Minister of Foreign Affairs to Mulai Hafid. I have always followed the fortunes of my prince Mulai Mohammed, the eldest son and rightful successor to the throne.

“ ‘ For years has he been kept in prison by Abdul Aziz, but when this trouble arose, he escaped and proclaimed himself Sultan at Rabat. I preached in his cause, and wrote letters calling all “ true believers ” to recognize the rightful heir to the throne. But yesterday, at the Mosque, I was seized and dragged into prison. To-morrow you will see me punished in public at the Bab-el-Bouget, and I bow my head before the will of “ A’llah.” My fate is written in the book of life. Kismet ! ’

“ This, Sidi ! was what I heard from the unfortunate man, and worse I have heard since.

“ My friend Marackshi, the Rikkas, came in and told me that he passed on the road a party of soldiers bringing Mulai Mohammed in chains to Fez. He will arrive some time in the morning. I will get the animals early and we will go out and see this disgraceful thing—a Shereefian prince

in chains. Now I have wearied thee with this my story, and I leave thee to sleep till the morrow. A'llah isabbah-Kum" ("God make your morning with prosperity")." With this, the Moorish way of wishing good night, he abruptly left the room.

At sunrise next morning, as soon as the gates of the town were open, we rode out to meet the sad cavalcade. Half an hour's ride and El Hadj counselled returning to the safety of the walls of the city. The news had spread, and groups of vicious tribesmen made it unsafe for Christians to be abroad. Back to the Bab-el-Bouget we went, where the Sultan sat, waiting to receive his brother. Soon the cavalcade entered the courtyard of the Palace.

About twenty travel-stained and weary horsemen guarded the unfortunate prince. The foremost cavaliers carried the coloured standards denoting the presence of a royal prince. These slowly wheeled to right and left and exposed the hapless Mulai Mohammed. In dirty rags, with heavy irons on his wrists and ankles, he was helped off the little mule that had borne him on his miserable journey from the coast. Slowly he painfully hobbled across the sunlit courtyard. Incarcerated for fourteen years in a fortress at

Rabat by Abdul Aziz, he had escaped, only to enter—a broken prisoner—the Palace in which he had himself reigned as Khalifa. No word was exchanged between the two brothers. Through the black portals of the Great Door of the Palace the tottering figure passed. The clang of the ponderous wooden door rang loudly as a death knell.

All was silent in the courtyard, even the tired escort stared with sad eyes at the portals, which required no inscriptive warning—"Abandon hope—all ye who enter here."

I had glanced at the face of Mulai Hafid as he sat in moody silence and noticed that it bore the same expression as when the sheep was thrust into the tiger's den. Poor hope for Mohammed, thought I, and my suspicions were verified. A few days later, Mulai Mohammed mysteriously died.

Great excitement prevailed throughout Fez. In a country unblest (?) with newspapers, the gossips gather round the shops at the Bazaar, to discuss the news of the day. Certain individuals are recognized as the authority on special subjects. Thus, if you wish to hear all the

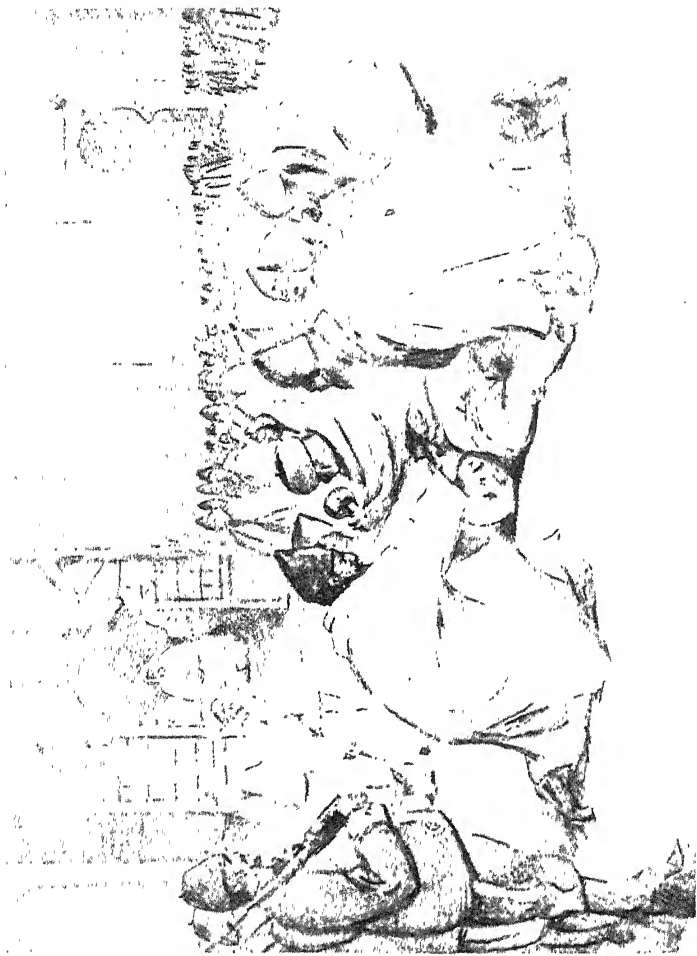
news of the Kaids and their doings, you go to the barber, who must be reliable, for "does he not shave the heads of the chief Makheznia? and, by A'llah! who should know better than they, what passes in their 'master's' house?" The coppersmiths and the farriers are responsible for news from the Palace, "for do not the slaves bring the royal horses to be shod? and surely the slaves know everything!" For scandal, the silk mercers excel. In this profession they have direct dealings with the ladies of the harem, *verb. sap.* So each group gathers round its particular newsmonger and hears more or less of the doings of the day.

It is highly probable that considering the source of information and the exaggeration and invention of the different imparters of the said news, who have to keep up their reputation against severe competition, hardly any of this information can be relied upon as strictly true. To us happy people who can purchase a halfpenny paper in the morning, all the news certified with cloudy photos, to prove their exactitude and infallibility, the Oriental methods are deplorable in the extreme. On this day, however, all were excitably talking of the one topic—the punishment to be meted out to Mohammed Abdul Lowi at the Bab-el-Bouget.

As we rode through the groups to that place, we were looked upon with unfriendly eyes. To their fanatical fancies, the N'zeranis must be in some way responsible for all calamities, and that a popular Sheik of a mosque should be torn from sanctuary and publicly punished, was surely a great calamity.

At the Bab-el-Bouget there was a scene of great excitement. The Sultan sat in state surrounded by his Wazirs; the holy Ulemas were in attendance to strengthen the royal presence by their holy and powerful presence. Red-coated soldiers kept the sullen crowd in order, and prevented their approaching too near the place of execution. I took up a position near the Sultan among the few Europeans invited by his Majesty, to impress them with the power he possessed over his people. I was surprised to see a lady with us. A French doctor and his wife (the first European lady to venture as far as Fez) had just arrived, and had come to see "the fun" as they called it.

The hum of the crowd suddenly ceased. A big gate at the side clanged open and from the black opening emerged a crowd of Makheznia, dragging a forlorn figure. He was brought in



PORTRAIT OF SHEIKH MOHAMMED ABDUL LOWI.

Sketched at Fezz.

front of the Sultan and degraded. His beard was plucked out and his head shaved, no water being used. Then he was thrown violently to the ground and the palms of his hands slashed open with a sharp dagger. Salt was rubbed in, and a round stone placed in each hand. The fingers were closed and a leather gauntlet drawn tightly over each clenched and mutilated fist.

“Now,” remarked Mulai Hafid, with a smile, “he will write no more letters.”

With a rope round his neck the poor being was led away to prison, to linger on in indescribable anguish till death once more claimed another victim of the salt torture. As he was led away, the blood trickling down his face, the glare of the sun prevented him from seeing Abdallah-el-Fasi, his former companion, but now Foreign Minister, endeavouring to stifle a yawn as he sat in the shadow of the wall near his master.

In tragedy began, and in tragedy ended, the career of Mohammed Abdul Lowi—Sheik of Zowia.

A blare of trumpets arrested the attention of the crowd as it slowly moved away. The Sultan rose, and to the tune of “God save the King,” played by the royal band, slowly walked the

length of the immense courtyard and entered the Palace by the private gate. As this solitary figure passed down the avenue of courtiers and viziers, the cry of "A'llah! embarek alma Sidi, Mulai Hafid," was shouted on high. Down to the ground bent the sycophantic subjects of this Oriental potentate, who not by the slightest gesture acknowledged the adulation.

With difficulty the few Europeans push their way through the resentful crowd. The late scene has impressed the natives with fear. Yes, Mulai Hafid will be obeyed, but also—cordially hated. In all, the day was not calculated to put one in high spirits, and that afternoon, Hardwick and I sat in our room in silence—thinking over the sickening sight we had witnessed.

CHAPTER IX

THE MAKHZEN

The rise of Makhzen—Turkish influence—Creation of a standing army—Power of the Makhzen—Ignorance of the Ministers—
—Abdallah-el-Fasi, Foreign Minister—Sultan's desire that I should start a newspaper in Fez.

For a few days, it was advisable to keep in the house and not venture among the discontented natives. Long monotonous periods were they, and to pass the tedious hours away, I sent for a learned scribe and obtained the following interesting description of that powerful institution the Makhzen.

In its present form, the Makhzen is a modern creation, but its origin dates back to the early Almohad princes. In the eighth century the scattered empire asserted its individuality in the Mussulman world and a Moroccan system of government manifested itself. Certain tribes objected to taxes in any shape, and being too strong to be resisted, their terms were accepted by the Shereefian Monarchs. The terms were to the effect, that these four tribes should be immune

from taxes, in exchange for military service and exclusive right to be employed in the various departments of the Government. The proximity of the Turks in Egypt had great influence over the Moorish Sultans. Their manner and customs were copied and surpassed. The Moroccan Court assumed most majestic airs and adopted the parasol, the ensign of sovereignty. Turkish drill instructors drilled the band of renegades, who were the foundation of the standing army. The formidable army of negroes, which was formed later, was the commencement of the black army, which eventually became so powerful as to depose the Sultan himself and elect one of their own choosing.

There was at the time of the Sultan Mulai Ismail a standing army of 150,000 men. With the degeneration of the kingdom in general the armies have faded away, and the Makhzen, in order to preserve their power, exclude all others from holding positions at Court and retain everything in their hands. All dealings with the Makhzen are carried on with tedious ceremonial. Even European ambassadors suffer considerable inconvenience when visiting the Court, and are subjected to the petty arrogance of the Makhzen. Although you find high-placed persons who

pretend to work for European interests, it is a great mistake to place confidence in them. As patriotic Moors and good Mussulmans they are bound by their faith and the firm tie that unites all the officials of the Makhzen, to humiliate and deceive all Christians. In fact, all those belonging to this powerful organization, from the Wazirs, permanent or temporary, down to the secretaries, the Makheznia and the negro slaves, bear alike the mark of this influence. The Makhzen is the only disciplined body in Morocco, and by its cohesion, secures its authority. It has its own adopted usages, its own peculiar prejudices. It has its own literary style, and even its own special costume. The most powerful faction of the Makhzen, which is formed by the Court, the administrative offices, and the army, centre round the person of the Sultan, whom they accompany upon all his travels. A member of the Makhzen leads an indolent existence, exempt from all cares outside the charmed circle. Promotion is only gained by the patronage of great people. The deplorable corruption, and the system of flattery and bribery, is followed to such an extent that the whole Makhzen is but a crowd of depraved sycophants and parasites.

By these means, any person, however low his

birth or position, may become a holder of a high office. For instance, the late Grand Vizier, Si Ahmed, was originally a slave in the Palace. The Kaid and all other officials are in the hands of the Makhzen, who levy substantial blackmail. Woe betide the Kaid or Oumana that becomes too rich. The greed of the Makhzen cannot be assuaged. Silently and secretly the ruin of the wealthy men is encompassed. No one is too high, but he can be ruined. A Kaid upon whom they have set their claws is compelled to follow painfully at the heels of the Makhzen, begging a return to favour, if he is fortunate enough to escape being sent to drag out a miserable existence in prison. The situation of a member of the Makhzen, who for any reason finds himself without specific employment, is extremely painful. Though he may be destitute of all resources, he must yet hold himself in readiness to obey the least summons. At death, the Makhzen sequesters the goods of its members, even of the highest official. Their children receive but a portion of the inheritance. The lowest Makhezni, as a member of this privileged body, becomes ridiculously pompous and puffed up with pride. He assumes a demeanour as haughty as it is offensive to all

outside the pale, whatever their position. The Makhzen costume consists of a kaftan with wide sleeves, and a shirt of fine linen, which buttons up to the neck, allowing the kaftan to be seen. The headdress is a red tarboosh, round which is wound the rozzer, which is made from twenty or thirty yards of fine white linen. Viziers and secretaries are authorized to wear the haik. The official correspondence is couched in a very flowery and flamboyant style. It is interspersed with a variety of meaningless adulatory phrases that tend to confound the real meaning of the epistle. For example, an order to the Minister of Finance to contract a loan begins thus :—

“In our present letter (God increase his power and make the glorious sun and his moon glitter in the firmament of his felicity) we have authorized our incorruptible servant (here follows name) to contract in the name and on behalf of the Treasury (Heaven fill it) a loan of, etc.”

Considering that the “incorruptible servant” is filching as much as he possibly can from the Treasury, it is certainly necessary to pray that “Heaven fill it.” Nothing but a miracle from heaven could fill up the gaps made by the avarice and greed of the whole staff of Ministers. To

obtain an interview with an official of the Makhzen, it requires a very long pocket and a large fund of patience. The high personages are surrounded by a host of secretaries, messengers, makheznia and hangers-on. To penetrate this circle, each parasite must be bribed. These dependents are very poorly paid, and their wages are generally a year or so in arrear. Their masters encourage the blackmail that is levied on all who are unlucky enough to require an interview with them. Even a most important interview with the Grand Vizier can be delayed by the meanest slave. If you have omitted to bribe the slave doorkeeper, he informs you that his "illustrious master" is in his bath, will you call again? The next time the "illustrious master is asleep," and so on until your purse-strings are loosened. From outer doorkeeper to inner doorkeeper, from him to scribe, and so to higher and higher functionaries you are passed, the bribe increasing in amount as you advance to your goal. Thus the Makhzen uphold their omnipotence and wear out the patience and purses of their unfortunate countrymen. Europeans have to pay a higher toll, and great efforts are made to impress on the Christians the importance of the Moor and the insignificance of the infidel.

A reference to the account of the British mission under Sir Charles Euan Smith to the Moroccan Court about fifteen years ago, illustrates the impudent and insulting manner in which the representatives of a great Power are treated by the Sultan of a degenerate and decadent nation. My peculiar opportunities of studying the Wazirs and Ministers of Fez, showed me that they are men of inferior intelligence. They are unworthy of the honour of serious negotiation with the learned and capable representatives of European Powers. It was incomprehensible to me that such men were taken seriously.

The qualifications of the Grand Vizier, Si Abbas, for his post, are nil. He is short and fat, and his greatest accomplishment is his capacity for consuming cous-cous in large quantities. His duties correspond to those of Minister of the Interior in a civilized country. He is also Judge and Arbitrator to all the tribes. Litigants from all parts of the Empire crowd round his divan every day. He is arbitrary judge of all cases submitted to him, and there is no appeal from his decision. His methods of justice, which are practised by all in power in the Mogreb, follow on the lines of the advice given by the old Vizier to his Pasha, who on being asked

his opinion regarding the case brought before them for judgment, said: "As the only respectability existing in either party consists in their worldly wealth, by deciding for him who gives most, you decide for the most respectable person."

The Minister for War is a Glowī—his sole qualification for office is his relationship to the King-Maker of Morocco—the Glowī of the Atlas. A more stupid man I have never met. Though filling the chief military post he could not distinguish between a military rifle and a shot gun. The Minister for Foreign Affairs was not at Fez, but was represented by his secretary, Si Abdallah-el-Fasi. This person was Kartib (preacher) to Abdul Aziz, and supposed to be the cleverest man in the Makhzen. His knowledge of the Koran is great; his knowledge of anything else is nil. To sit for an hour or two in his bureau, chatting with him and his two secretaries, was a source of great amusement to me. His office was the most important in the Makhzen during the political crisis. It is a room about twelve feet square by twenty feet high, and is situated on the right side of the Dar Makhzen. On a mat spread on the floor at one end of the room sat his Excellency with his two secretaries, under a canopy of

cobwebs that stretched from corner to corner of the dirty walls. His desk is a small wooden structure about eighteen inches high.

Each man brings his own pen and ink, which he carefully wraps up and takes away when the day's work is over. A few straw cushions for natives and a chair for Europeans are provided.

The conversation generally begins with a question of clothing. "Can white stockings be sent from England?" It is a hint that a pair would be acceptable. You cannot astonish them with accounts of the wonderful inventions of modern science. Their sense of superiority over the "accursed Christian" is such that they but nod at the stories of railways, telephones, etc., and imply by their scorn, that if the Moors choose to do so, they would invent more wonderful things than that. But they have all they require. Bismillah!—and all N'zeranis are liars—A'llah Akbar! God is Great and Mahomet is His Prophet.

Yet, for all their assumed superiority and contempt for the N'zerani, they dearly covet his possessions. A watch is the most prized of all, and it was a great joke to watch old Hadj Abdul Ali ben Achmet. This white-haired

old Kaid of the Kasbah would waddle across the courtyard of the Dar Makhzen every morning and squat down next to his friend Abdallah-el-Fasi, the Foreign Minister. He came ostensibly for a gossip, but I am certain it was only to go through a singular performance, to cause the green-eyed monster of jealousy to eat at the hearts of his colleagues.

For a few moments the old man would chatter away, then, from his leather satchel he would take a small parcel. Slowly and gravely he undid the string, unfolded the brown paper and laid it beside him, after patting out the creases. Then three or four more paper wrappings would undergo similar treatment, when, the last tissue paper unfolded, there was disclosed a green leather case. This was slowly opened, and a washleather covering carefully pulled off a cheap imitation gold watch. With great attention he would study the gilded face of the watch, although he could not tell the time by it. Envious eyes watched his every movement. Slowly and carefully the wrappers were arranged, the string adjusted, and the precious parcel returned to the satchel. Three or four times in a morning the old chap went through this performance.

It was so effective, and the envy of Abdallah-el-Fasi was such, that this gentleman invited me to his house, and in the privacy of his room asked me to send him a gold watch from London—"But it must be bigger than that of the Kaid of the Kasbah," he impressed upon me.

To show their superiority and knowledge of the world, Moorish officials will occasionally touch upon some incident in European history.

"Do you know Napoleon?" was asked me one day by Abdallah-el-Fasi, and "Did you ever fight him?"

His secretary, to demonstrate that he also was learned in history, asked if I had seen Oliver Cromwell lately, remarking that in his opinion "Cromwell was a good soldier, but a bad Englishman, and ought to be put in prison." And was he still a Kaid?

I was fortunately saved the trouble of answering these difficult questions, for a Makhezni came to call me to the Sultan.

On that particular occasion his Majesty had a surprise for me. After the usual compliments, he abruptly said: "I want you to make me a *Daily Graphic* in Fez. Let it be ready in a few days." I politely explained that this was

a matter which required much preparation and I could not undertake it on such short notice.

“Oh! yes,” replied Mulai Hafid; “I’ve thought all about that. I have bought a printing press, paper, and ink. It is all here at the Palace, and you can commence at once. Take all the slaves you need to help you. In Egypt they have newspapers in Arabic, and I see how useful they are, and I will have my own journal here in Fez.”

I explained that without telegraphic communication it was impossible to do such a thing. After much argument I positively refused to risk the undertaking. His Majesty was very much disappointed. He was convinced that with a newspaper he could send forth his edicts and opinions throughout the country.

It was useless for me to point out that by the time news reached Fez from the coast by the uncertain means of couriers, who took four days under the best conditions, and sometimes two weeks in the rainy season, for their journey—news would be stale at Fez. Then, for that news to be printed and sent back again—it was too ridiculous. Fez itself would not be able to furnish more than a column at the utmost, and with what would he fill the paper?

But who can argue against the will of a Sultan? He would not be denied. A Syrian and a Frenchman were sent for from Tangier, and they, thinking it a good "spec." for themselves, forthwith set to work. Failure was inevitable. The first four numbers never appeared in public. About twenty impressions of the fifth number were duly printed, ten of which were sent to me. The Syrian was a most capable man, but his colleague was utterly unfit for such an enterprise.

The end of the matter was, the Sultan in a great rage ordered the whole machinery to be thrown on the scrap heap. He was angry with me for not having taken the matter in hand; but I assured him it required more than the mere wish or word of even a Sultan to print and publish a newspaper under the conditions he proposed.

CHAPTER X

DINNER WITH A CABINET MINISTER

Environs of Fez—Cruel punishment for false weights—Reception—
Raisuli makes the tea—A Moor's impressions of England—
Mystification by card-tricks—A shot in the dark.

HEAVY rains had swollen the rivers and no couriers had arrived for days, as they had to wait by the banks until the waters fell. Shut up in the prison-like houses, the monotonous inactivity was most depressing. The only pleasure for a European at Fez is to get on horseback and make an excursion outside the walls of the city. This is really most delightful. To reach the hills surrounding the city, you pass through olive groves and vineyards, over a carpet of little flowers that throw up their delicious scent as the hoofs of your horse crush them underfoot. Up the steep sides of the hills you stumble, and then from the summits, the glorious views of the city lie down at your feet. With a pure blue sky above, the white minarets of the town below

glistening in the glorious sunlight, you inhale the cool refreshing breeze as it is wafted from the snow-clad Atlas Mountains in the hazy distance. What a delightful holiday it would be for tired city men to visit this really magnificent spot! But let us not dream of such a calamity! for then a train with luxurious sleeping apartments would be requisitioned for the man of money, and what vandalism to spoil such a country with the smoke of railways! A poor man myself, I sighed to have the first concession for this railroad, but as a lazy idealist, I deplored the necessity of spoiling the lovely scene. As I sat on my horse and revelled in the beauty of nature, a sharp struggle occurred between my two selves, but the influence of this commercial age triumphed, and I longed for the concession. But still, how delightful everything seemed, cantering over the carpet of flowers in the glorious sunshine—the mere idea of Fleet Street with its sordidness made me shudder.

Lunch-time approached, so we turned in the direction of the city gate. A long stretch of level plain gave a chance for a gallop. With a loose rein we pelted along and pulled up at the dark entrance of the Bab-el-Seegma. The

exhilarating ride had made us happy and thoroughly contented with everything in the world.

Side by side, Hardwick and I rode and chatted pleasantly, as our horses, with panting sides, walked slowly through the wider streets on our way home to lunch. But stop! What was that noise? Nearer and nearer we approached, turned a corner, and there in the open space of the market-place a fearful sight met our eyes.

From a wooden gibbet fixed in the wall, a man was hanging by one wrist, his toes just reached the ground. A crowd jeered around him, and gamins pelted him with stones and refuse. The agony depicted on the face of the sufferer was horrible to see. We reined in our horses and gazed with horror at the scene. After our beautiful ride which had made us happy with all the world, this scene came with awful suddenness and made us sick at heart. Hardwick nervously fumbled with the butt of his revolver, and it was hard to have to ride by indifferently. But Absolem, who accompanied us, had anxiously bidden us to get away quickly. "I will tell you later; but get home, for it is not safe to be about on these occasions," he said.



PUNISHMENT FOR GIVING FALSE WEIGHT.

(Sketched at P'ez.)

After lunch Absolem made inquiries and told us the story of the affair.

It appears that a merchant had been accused of giving false weight. He had been seized and carried to the place of punishment, and from sunset to sunrise he would hang as we had seen him. He would then be cut down and his senseless body carried home by his friends. It was the usual method of punishment for giving false weights. The explanation did not dispel the unpleasant feeling that the occurrence had left with us. Still we had a more important event to occupy our minds for the present. That was nothing less than an invitation to take dinner at the house of Abdallah-el-Fasi, the Foreign Minister.

A little after six o'clock I was on the way to the house of the dignitary. At a narrow turning I was somewhat delayed by a party of men carrying a dead horse. This was a most exceptional occurrence, for the dead animals are generally allowed to lie where they fall. It is quite a common affair to see the loathsome carcasses lying about the streets, or to stumble over one in the dark and disturb the rats into scurrying away from their meal at the unusual interruption.

It appears that this poor horse had fallen in a very narrow street, so had perforce to be carried into the open, where it would very quickly be eaten by the dogs which roam about the town seeking any offal or dead animals to feed upon.

On arriving at his house I was ushered into a large room in which were seated five or six guests of high rank. Abdallah took me by the hand and gravely introduced me to the company. A silken cushion was placed on the divan, upon which I seated myself.

The repast commenced with green tea served round in small glasses. The custom of preparing this is peculiar to the country. The principal native guest is given the honour of making the tea. In this case it was Raisuli, who, being under British protection, had been invited to dinner in my honour. This notable brigand, whose exploits are notorious over the civilized world, now enjoys British protection. He had come to Fez soliciting a Kaidship from Mulai Hafid, but the Sultan would not appoint him to anything until he repudiated his "protection." Since writing this, Raisuli has accepted a Kaidship and refunded a portion of the money paid him by the English Government. If he complies with all



A MOORISH DINNER PARTY.

(Sketched at Fez.)

the Sultan's wishes in this matter he will probably gain a Kaidship, but will eventually lose his head, which will decorate one of the gates at Fez.

He accepted the invitation to do the honours of the evening, and ordered the negress to place the native brass tray in front of where he sat cross-legged on the divan. The methods of proceeding are not such as would recommend themselves to an English tea-party.

Measuring out the tea in his hand, he dropped it in the pot; the negress slave then poured boiling water over it. This was swilled round and the water poured off. The pot was then filled with huge lumps of sugar, broken roughly from a sugar-loaf, and a little mint was added. A small quantity of the concoction was poured into a glass, sipped and poured back again to the pot. This tasting process was continued until the required delicacy of flavour was reached. The company then drank the customary three glasses of this syrupy mixture, drawing it through their teeth with a sound like a horse drinking. As each glass was finished and replaced in the tray it was refilled and handed back by the "keeper of the pot," who was supposed to remember to whom each glass

belonged. At a sign from the host the tray was removed, and another slave approached each person with a brass bowl, soap and towel, and a bronze kettle of warm water. The guests washed their right hands preparatory to the dinner.

We all sat round one small table about six inches high, upon which was placed the dish. The courses were many and varied. As says the Hadith, "The blessing of God rests on the food taken with the fingers," so all good Mohammedans follow the words of their prophet. No knife must be used on bread, and the small round loaves are broken up and handed round. The Tajin, or stew, is not difficult to manipulate, although the olives floating in argon oil slip through your fingers. Miniature tugs of war occur with your *vis-à-vis* in the effort to dismember a fowl or divide a tough piece of meat.

As a particular mark of favour, the host will from time to time place before you a little tit-bit which he has torn off with his greasy fingers. However your stomach rebels against it, you have to swallow the morsel. During the meal the national dish of cous-cous is invariably served. This dish is made from broken grains of wheat specially prepared by the women. It

is served, piled up like a huge cone with the meat on the top. Each person scoops out his own little hole in the side, and must not trespass on his neighbour's portion. To the inexperienced, it is difficult to manage the cous-cous without making an awful mess of it. The small grain must be judiciously compressed into a loose ball and then shot into the mouth with the back of the thumb. The Moors take extreme delight in watching the ineffectual efforts of Europeans who are in difficulty with their cous-cous. Moors are very great eaters, and little conversation is carried on during the meal. A bowl of water is passed from hand to hand for those who require drink. The last course finished, the bowl and water are once more requisitioned, and the hands and mouth washed.

All traces of dinner being removed, we resumed our places on the divan and conversation became general. With the exception of Raisuli and Ben Achmed, a white-bearded Fasi, who in his youth had visited Manchester, the rest of the company had never seen a coast town, and were most ignorant of anything but their immediate surroundings. Old Ben Achmed entertained the company with wonderful accounts of things he had seen while

living some years (as he said) in England. He had evidently been but a short time in England, and his uncurbed imagination and shameless inventions kept me in a continued state of uneasiness.

After each fearful and wonderful narration, he would prove to the others his unchallengeable veracity by waving his hand in my direction and saying, "It is true—here is an Englishman, and he knows." He had evidently formed his own opinion of what he had seen, and invented explanations with the Moorish method of thinking. He informed the interested company that in England the women were shameless. They went about unveiled and showed their mouth to everybody. Certainly there were some that wore veils, but then you could see through the veils, and they were only worn to prevent men from kissing them in the street. He then explained the marvels of the railway. "A journey from London to Manchester, by A'llah! costs no more than three or four dollars. It is a long journey. More than a thousand miles. God is my witness that I speak the truth. You take a seat in a sumptuous apartment and—pouf!! the room flies. In three or four hours, by the mercy of A'llah, you arrive at

your destination. But the infidels made me pay for a small green paper. When I went to my seat, a Makhezni, with silver on his clothes, came and cut a piece out of it. Presently another Makhezni with very ill manners, cut another piece away, and laughed at my remonstrances. When I reached my journey's end a soldier in a blue helmet took the green paper away from me. By A'llah ! truly the N'zeranis are liars and swindlers."

It was useless for me to try and explain the inner mysteries of a railway ticket. They were convinced that their co-religionist had been shamefully despoiled.

Superstition enters largely into the life of the Moors. It is quite easy to scare them, even with the simplest of sleight of hand. Sending a slave to buy a pack of Spanish playing-cards as used in Fez, I told them I would show them a few tricks. I had previously provided myself with a similar pack which I had in my pocket, as I required a duplicate pack for my purpose. When the cards were brought I did a few simple tricks. They were startled out of their usual impassivity. "Wahli ! wahli !" they cried, "it is wonderful. Surely this Christian is in league with Shitain." This, however, was

nothing to the sensation I created with my final and most impressive performance.

I had found an opportunity during dinner to secrete the ace of hearts from my spare pack in the hood of my fat friend's d'jellaba—him of the railway story. I now announced that the room was full of devils which I had called to my aid. In spite of their Moorish pride, my audience exhibited signs of nervousness. Frightened glances were made over shoulders into the corners of the dimly lighted room, and the slave attendants drew near their masters for protection. Manipulating the pack in the most approved St. George's Hall style, I asked Abdallah-el-Fasi to take a card, and forced upon him the ace of hearts. As he held it in his trembling fingers I called for a lighted brazier. Then I ordered the Minister to tear the card into small pieces and thrust them into the glowing charcoal, which he did till they were utterly consumed. The company sat in dead silence with bated breath and staring eyes, while I muttered the chorus of, "Stop yer tickling, Jock," by way of incantation. This produced a most satisfactory effect. Finally, I waved my hands in the air, calling on the devils to aid me. Then I

remarked that the demons had collected the smoke from the bits of cards, and were reconstructing it, in obedience to my commands.

Presently I announced that the card was now restored to its original condition, but was still invisible. Indicating each individual with a wave of the hand, I finally settled upon my stout travelled friend, and crying in a loud voice, "All stations to Marble Arch," I made a pass towards him, and announced that the devils had placed the card in his d'jellaba. Everybody shivered, and I asked Abdallah-el-Fasi to look. He did so, with many misgivings, and when he produced the card, there was a simultaneous cry of horror. The old gentleman turned grey. "Truly the N'zerani is a disciple of Shitain," he quivered. Abdallah-el-Fasi turned to me and said he had an engagement at the Dar Makhzen, and would I please excuse them. I did so with pleasure, and bade the company good-bye. As I made my exit I heard a profound sigh of relief from all present.

Riding through the streets of Fez at night-time is both unpleasant and dangerous. The innumerable wooden gates are shut, and it is a very troublesome affair to get them opened. After

repeated shouting and knocking a sleepy guardian will grumbly open the great wooden door, after the usual backsheesh has been administered. A pack of yelping dogs, barking and snapping at your horse's heels, makes the frightened animal shy and bolt along the dark and uneven streets. Sometimes a shot from some unseen fanatic awakens the echoes of the night, and the bullet will flatten itself by the wall at your side. One is not always lucky enough to escape them, and Absolem' was for some days suffering from a wound from a bullet that whizzed past my head and lodged in his shoulder as he rode behind me.

CHAPTER XI

SOCIETY AND FAMILY

The Fasis—Family life—Child-bride of fourteen—Feminine life—Superstition and worship of “Marabouts”—Marriage ceremony—Slavery—An incident of the slave-market—The position and privileges of the Shereefian families—Doctors—Absolem buys me a love-charm.

AFTER the last week of unpleasant incidents, it was quite a pleasure to receive an invitation from my old friend Abdallah ben Mokta, to attend the festivities on the occasion of the marriage of his daughter, and I then learnt some interesting details of the domestic life at Fez.

The life of a Fasi, when not engaged in rebellion, is spent in monotonous refinement. The young Fasi prides himself on his pure descent and aristocratic appearance. When walking abroad he carefully pulls over his face the hood of his d’jellaba to guard his white skin from the sun. The introduction of female black slaves into the harems accounts for the many dark complexions to be seen, but the pure-blooded

Fasi has as white a skin as one of any northern race. Before marriage the young men are provided with a small garden and a black female slave by their parents, and visit the paternal roof at festivals.

There are no places of amusement, and the evenings are spent by the elder men in the bosoms of their family. Thursdays and Saturdays are the only days set apart for visiting friends. Then the time is passed in simple games of cards, or in listening to the weird effects of itinerant musicians. Sometimes a group of staid men can be seen sitting on the walls of the city, watching the sunset. If they allow their minds to think at all, it is to regret that the days when Christian slaves were as plentiful as sheep in Morocco are not still with them.

All was excitement when I arrived at the house of Abdallah. Slaves and servants were hurrying here and there with loads of sweetmeats, fruits, and other edibles. From a gallery above, the clatter of female tongues indicated the presence of women. Occasionally a roguish face would appear over the balcony, and large dark saucy eyes would glance down in my direction. As I surreptitiously looked their way they

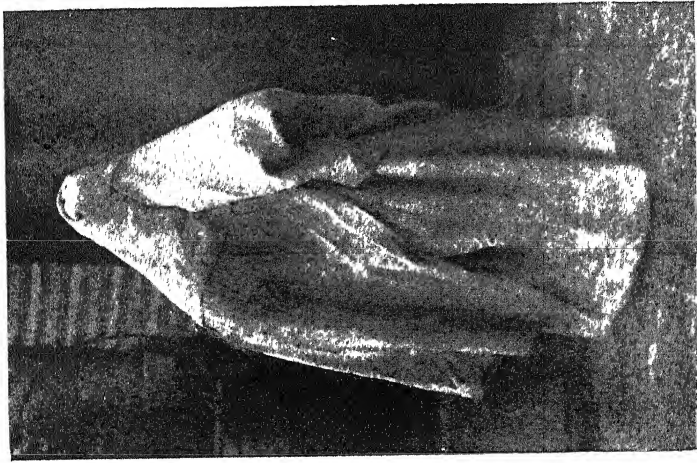
would suddenly vanish to reappear in another corner.

Abdallah was most proud of his daughter, and assured me she was a "pearl of pearls." The rippling laughter and the continual chatter from above, where those curious eyes were continually spying down, was too inviting, and in desperation I asked Abdallah if I could have the pleasure of seeing the bride. To my very great surprise, he said, "My friend, it is not the custom for the faces of our women to be seen, but with thee I will make exception. Have patience for a while, and she shall be by herself and thou shalt speak with her.'

[While he went to arrange matters, I prepared my camera in order to get a surreptitious snapshot. I was eventually successful in obtaining a good one. To a room near the roof, Abdallah led me by a stone staircase, which I had not noticed before, and standing against the wall was Zaida, the fourteen-year-old bride elect, quite a picture as she stood there.

As shy as a mouse, she hardly dared to raise her eyes from the ground, and stood with her hands hanging by her side, not venturing to move a finger. Her young childish face was of a rich

olive tint, but the tattooing on her forehead and her hands, stained reddish-brown with henna, somewhat marred the pretty effect. Her costume was a mass of delicious colour. The "kaftan" reaching to her feet was a light green; over this the "manscuriya" of white muslin lace allowed the colour to appear through it. A gold-embroidered leather belt, pulled tightly round the waist, was very becoming, and the tiny feet were covered with green slippers intricately embroidered with a thread of gold. Her head was covered with a bright-coloured silk handkerchief, from which pended two long black plaits of hair interwoven with pearls. Several rows of precious stones hung in sparkling profusion round her neck, and her arms, wrists, and fingers were encircled with gold bracelets and rings of costly design. One great pity was to see the ears torn down with heavy hooped gold earrings almost as big as bracelets. I was not permitted to prolong the interview, and my polite wish to see some of the other ladies was met with a direct, but polite refusal. My sincere remarks of admiration were received by Abdallah with great gratification, and I was pleased to find at least one Moor, who showed a little affection for his daughter.



MOORISH WOMAN VEILED.



MOORISH WOMAN UNVEILED.

But this thought was soon dissipated when the old man, whispering all the way down the stairs, assured me that all the ornaments were pure gold, the stones real precious stones, and the silk pure silk, and that it cost him many hundreds of dollars. He appreciated the costly apparel and thought I did the same; I dared not disabuse his mind and say that I preferred the wearer.

A woman's life in Morocco is not to be envied by the women of Western civilization, and certainly there are no suffragettes in the country. They are kept in great seclusion and have very little culture. A very few know how to read and write, but the majority refrain from prayers from sheer ignorance. Their chief duty is to look after the household, and when their husbands are rich enough to possess negro slaves they pass a life of monotonous indolence. Not allowed to walk abroad, their only recreation is to mount the flat roofs of the houses, after a long day spent in making futile fancy embroideries.

In most other towns of Morocco I spent the delicious cool hours of the evening on these flat roofs, but in Fez they are reserved for the women, and the male population are debarred from using them. On first arriving at Fez I was not aware of this,

and had mounted on the roof of my house to enjoy the beautiful view. I had not been there long when a shot rang out and a bullet whistled by me. This was followed by several more, when Absolem called up to me from the garden below, and explained the reason of the fluster. It is needless to say I did not venture again.

The seclusion in which the women live prevents any semblance of a love-affair. All marriages are arranged by the parents of both parties, and the young couple do not see each other until after the ceremony. The young Moor is practically indifferent, and no wild passionate love-stories occur in Morocco. The women are not considered of much consequence, and the want of esteem in which women are held is expressed in a Moorish proverb, "A woman is like unto your shadow, run away from it and it will always follow you, run after it and you never catch it." The indifference of the young man is not shared by the more inquisitive young female mind. Secluded as are all the females from all outward influence, they are full of superstition, and eagerly consult the Marabouts, who make a good thing out of it. In the case of Zaida, for instance, the Marabout

would be requisitioned to gain an idea of her future lord and master. This saintly person finds little difficulty in practising on the ignorant and superstitious females.

Without any difficulty he ascertains the identity of the bridegroom and carefully studies his personal appearance. He then repairs to the residence of the bride on the day appointed. A Thursday is set apart for these *séances*. The prospective bride smears the left side of her face with khol and rouge, and prepares a huge plate of cous-cous with her left hand. Then she pays successive visits throughout the city to seven baths, seven mills, seven bakeries, and to the banks of seven streams to invite the genii to supper. At midnight the females of the house assemble at the gate of the house, and in total darkness go through the prescribed formula of welcome to the ghostly visitants. The cous-cous is already set out for the delectation of the supernatural guests. When a reasonable time has elapsed for the supposed genii to finish their meal, all present ascend to the house-top. Fires are lighted, and the Marabout, with great solemnity, throws small pellets of various drugs upon them, on behalf of the girl for whom the oracle is to

.

be interrogated. By the various forms assumed by the flames and smoke, the Marabout then professes to describe the future husband of the girl. The ceremony concluded, he takes his departure, with a substantial reward and a further enhancement of his reputation as a magician and a holy man.

I sat with some of the guests in the corner of the garden, and we heard the negresses as they carried Zaida round the garden, chanting in the usual formula for the occasion. "Here is beauty without perfume. Here is beauty without perfume." Later in the evening a deputation of the relations of the bridegroom came to fetch her. A procession was formed and proceeded to lead her to her new home, first calling on Mulai Edriss from outside his mosque to bless her and her offspring. On arriving at the threshold of her husband's home the symbols of house-keeping were presented to her—a key, a piece of bread, and a date.

While she was being prepared in the nuptial chamber—her face rouged and henna painted in special designs on her arms and legs—the bridegroom was going through his tedious performance. With his head covered by a white veil and

mounted on a horse, he was led round the town to visit all the saints. The procession was preceded by a party of his friends, who continually fired their guns under the nose of the horse, making it as uncomfortable as possible for the blindfolded rider. The poor brute plunged and kicked at each discharge, and the bridegroom had much difficulty to keep his seat. After about two hours' ride, he was lifted from his seat and carried to the nuptial chamber. He then for the first time saw his wife, who was presented to him with these words, "Behold the gracious beauty, behold the tender date, behold the fine amber."

If the first-born of the young couple is a girl, it is considered a happy omen. The baby is at once stained from head to foot with henna and its body smeared with butter and wrapped in flannels. After six days it is baptized, and on this occasion, washed for the first time.

At a year old the head is shaved, only a single tuft left for Mahomet to grab at, to pull them into Paradise. The head of a boy is left in this style, but as girls do not enter Paradise, the hair is allowed to grow until long enough, when she is about seven or eight years of age, to be made into two plaits. She is soon old enough to

take the veil, and her parents now look out for a suitable husband for her.

The boys are circumcised between the age of two years and thirteen years, as is most convenient for the parents to afford to pay for the ceremony. On this occasion special rich garments are hired and much ceremony is observed. There are no registry offices in Morocco, and births, marriages, and deaths require no registration. On rare occasion only do the women of the higher classes leave the house. Sometimes a muffled figure astride a mule passes you in the street. It is one of the wives of some high official on the way to amuse the leisure hours of her master in some garden.

The negress slaves enjoy a much better time than their Moorish mistresses. They are not bound by iron laws and customs. They go unveiled in the streets, and if ill-treated they can fly to a sanctuary and claim to be re-sold. If a negress bears a child to her master she gains her freedom. In Marrakesh the slave market is carried on in an open space and the slaves are sold by auction, but in Fez it is done by agreements. A big dealer would have some twenty or thirty slaves of all ages in his house, and would-be purchasers come and inspect them prior to the

purchase. Although, as a rule, the slaves are well treated, yet their lot at times is hard. While on a visit to a wealthy Moor at Marrakesh, a charming little negress waited on us. Playing about the room was her sister, a little black dot, with her black hair interwoven with red and blue beads. This little mite was quite at home, and evidently the pet of her master. She sat on his knee and chatted away to his and our delight. Pointing her fat finger at us, she demanded of her master why he allowed unbelievers to dare to sit in his presence with boots on. "Why don't you cut their heads off?" she counselled him. We all roared with laughter, which so disconcerted my lady, that she struggled off her master's knee and ran to fetch her mother to us. A comely negress with a child at her breast, appeared at the call of our Moorish friend, and quite kindly he explained the reason for the child's tears. How homely it all seemed, and how happy the lot of a slave in Morocco.

The next day I visited the slave market. The sale always takes place at sundown in a large quadrangular court. The buyers sit round in groups, the slaves following the auctioneers, who walk round, calling the price of the slaves as if he

were selling a carpet or yards of calico. A sign from a squatted Moor, and a slave kneels down and is handled and examined from head to foot. If she passed the inspection the price is haggled over and she goes through the same examination many times before being purchased. After watching the process for some time, I was surprised to see an auctioneer approach with a group of slaves I at once recognized. The mother with the child at her breast, the girl who had waited on us, and the little dot who considered we should be decapitated. Quite cheerful they looked, as, in fact, all the slaves did; they did not seem to mind the change of masters in the least, and my ideas of slavery were quite modified. But the tragic side soon appeared. Our charming little friend was quite happy, running about from group to group, receiving sweetmeats, and causing much amusement with her saucy chatter. At last her sister was called, examined, and bought. The poor mother looked on anxiously as the bargain was made, quite expecting they were all going in one lot. When she understood otherwise, she burst into tears and hugged the remaining two to her breast. The purchased one remained with her buyers, and round and round, the mother with her two babies



"SAINT HOUSE" OUTSIDE FEZ.

This saint is a specialist for barren women.



THE SLAVE MARKET.

trotted after the auctioneer. Soon the little one got tired and hung crying to the bright scarf trailing from her mother's waist. Trot, trot, trot they went. No one seemed to want them, and as each time the poor woman passed the spot where her other child stood, she turned her face, streaming with tears, towards her and cried some endearing words. How tired she was, hardly able to drag one weary foot after the other! Would nobody buy them and stop that fearful dragging trot? I thought. Surely the woman will drop in a moment. But no! The stony indifferent faces of the Moors paid no heed to her distress. At last the little one was called and bought as a companion for the child of an old white-haired Moor. This time the poor mother surely thought she would be bought as well, but no, she wasn't wanted. Her grief was too much for me to bear. I got up and left the place, leaving the almost exhausted creature, with her remaining child at the breast, still dragging her weary legs after the auctioneer.

For days I could not eliminate from my mind the distressing sight, and as I lay in my bed, that doleful cry of the auctioneer while he hawked his human goods would not leave me. Say what

people will about the bad factory system, it is heaven itself compared with Eastern slavery.

The Fasis are very hospitable, but a guest is not supposed to stay more than the regulation three days. Although the Mohammedan religion is democratic in appearance, since all true believers are equal, Moorish society has marked distinctions. The wealthy classes assume a haughty air towards the lower classes, who approach them with every mark of Oriental kow-towing. A dependant on approaching an official will bow his body almost to the ground, and kiss the hem of the great man's garment. It is the Shereefian families that receive the most adulation—one could almost say worship.

About the best paying game in Morocco is to be born a Shereef. Thousands of these holy men travel about the country receiving the best that can be bestowed upon them by the superstitious people. They are recruited from the holiest place—Tafilet. Here no Europeans dare approach. Most holy are the inhabitants, and of royal blood. This city was chosen as the alms-house, as it were, for the numerous progeny of the Sultans. When we hear of a Kaid riding out with an escort of his seventy sons, without counting the daughters,

then the offspring of a Sultan must be quite a respectable number. It is impossible to find positions for all these princes of blood, and the overflow is sent to Tafilet, and, by the grace of A'llah! multiplies exceedingly. The royal revenues, always in a precarious state, are not sufficient to supply the Shereefian children with cash, consequently they have to find the wherewithal to continue their royal existence. Now, how could a prince of blood work? Impossible! Here the Shereefian descent must be utilized. Out from Tafilet journey the indigent offspring of the monarchs, as saints. With the utmost devotion the "faithful" respond to the call of these holy men, who, fully appreciating the devoutness of the ignorant populace, live an easy, lazy existence, conferring great favours by the mere fact of their holy presence in the vicinity.

To a superstitious people with whom all illnesses are ascribed to the influence of evil spirits, medicine is very closely allied with religion. Visits to the tombs of the saints are made for almost any complaint, each saint being a specialist for certain diseases, just in the same manner as the physicians of Harley Street; although Harley Street lacks physicians for the most feared

complaint a Moorish woman can possibly suffer from—to be barren. Cancer, consumption, or any such thing is quite trivial compared to that curse of not being able to have a son to say prayers for a father to help him into Paradise. Unhappy is the lot of a barren woman. Despised by her husband, she must bear the ridicule of her relations. Countless journeys to the most noted saints are made, and the Moors in charge of the saint houses are most sympathetic. Whether the holy visits are efficacious I have not been able to ascertain.

For the simpler ailments, a visit to the itinerant quack is made. A red flag, fluttering from the top of a small tent, denotes the presence of a doctor. To him resort all invalids, who receive a remedy for their diseases in the shape of a mysterious powder and a written charm, which are sometimes both swallowed by the patient. These quacks guarantee to cure with their written charms anything from a fever to a broken leg, but their speciality is in procuring love-charms. For curiosity I sent Absolem to get one of these magic love-charms. For the enormous sum of half a peseta (the value of twopence-halfpenny in English money) he brought

me two packages and a host of valuable and instructive directions.

To cause the affections of the lady I was to fall in love with to turn in my direction, I was first to burn one packet, put it in water, and swallow it before retiring to bed. Then by hook or crook I was to steal, surreptitiously, a thread from an undergarment of the said young lady. This must be done on washing-day, when the said garment would be left to dry in the sun. Then three hairs must be pulled from my beard and burnt with the thread in a palm leaf. The ashes of these must be wrapped in a rose leaf and placed by myself under the pillow of the young lady as she lay asleep on her bed. The second packet must be under my pillow for three nights, and then thrown in the direction of the house of the lady. In three days the charm would have worked, and my heart's desire would have been accomplished. Absolem seriously repeated all these instructions, and was eager to commence operations. I assured him that there was no particular lady I pined for at that moment, but when I returned to England I would try the wonderful charm. (I haven't done so yet.)

CHAPTER XII

JEWS OF MOROCCO

Position and distribution of the Jews in Morocco—Social position—
Dress and language—Miserable conditions—Tenacity to their
religious worship—Family life—"Mellahs"—Jewish legends—
School of the "Alliance Israélite."

IN writing of Morocco it is imperative to give some description of a most important section of the people of that country, viz. the Jews. To use a metaphorical explanation, they are the oil which makes the antiquated rusty engine capable of working at all. This remarkable race exists, crushed and tortured by every portion of the mechanism of an Oriental feudal system, soiling the outward appearance of the machine with the dirt and rust collected from the internal parts; yet its oily insidiousness has prevented the rust and preserved the dilapidated separate parts from the destroying friction, and allowed the crazy old machine to carry on its existence.

There are three classes of Jews in the Mogreb :—the Spanish, who are the descendants of the



ATLAS JEWS.



COUNTRY WOMEN (ATLAS).

refugees from Spain and have settled in the coast towns; the Moorish Jews, who emigrated from Palestine at the commencement of the Christian era and live in the Berber country; and the Atlas Jews. The latter are by far the most interesting. The exact period of their settlement in the country is uncertain. In an old cemetery in the Sus country, it is said, there is an inscription on a tombstone, which dates back far beyond the destruction of the second temple. Many times did I send a native to get a rubbing of this inscription, but superstition is so rife that they each came back with the same old tale—"Evil spirits which haunt burial grounds would not permit them to do my bidding!" No European has penetrated into the interior of Sus, and although I made many endeavours to get there, I was always forced to turn back.

The Atlas Jews are of fine physique and warlike appearance. Living entirely under the protection of a Moorish Sheik, they fight for him and are protected by him, as the villeins were under the feudal lord in England, in the "good old times." The Jews of the plains have a more uncomfortable lot; practically slaves to the Berbers, they are only allowed to follow menial occupations.

The life of a Jew is of less consequence than that of a dog, and a couple of dollars is sufficient "blood-money" for a murdered Jew. This is not paid to the relatives, but to the Sheik or Kaid under whom they live in sufferance. The Jews of the coast towns are immune from most of the rigorous exactions, thanks to the presence and intervention of the Europeans. Since the Madrid Convention many wealthy families have gained European protection, and have helped to improve the unhappy conditions under which they were compelled to live. The younger generation dress in European costume, and the commerce of the country is practically under their control. In Mogador all business must be conducted through a Jewish broker. Yet the position of the Jewish race in Morocco is uniformly wretched. They are restricted to dress in black, a colour most detested by the Moors. Formerly they were compelled to walk barefoot, and although in the coast towns this is not now compulsory, in the interior no Jew dares to walk past a Mosque with his shoes on.

About the thirteenth century, the Sultan found it necessary to protect the Jews from the violence of the Moors, and special quarters were built and

called Mellahs. The literal meaning of the word is "salt," and the origin of this strange appellation is difficult to ascertain. The learned Moor says it was so-called by the Moors in derision, because the heads of all rebels were sent to the Mellah to be salted by the Jewish butchers, preparatory to being hung above the gates of the town. The Rabbis repudiate the word as being derisive, and affirm that the Jews were the first to designate their quarter as Mellah, "the place of salt." Their explanation is that as salt is to life, so are the Jews to the rest of the world. But recent events seem to favour the former explanation, for during the late troubles at Marrakesh a quantity of heads were sent to the Mellah, and the Jews were compelled to pickle them in salt.

The Jew must approach a Moor with abject servility and address him as "Sidi" (My Lord). They cannot possess property, and their oath is not accepted in a lawsuit. Within the prescribed walls of the Mellah the community enjoys almost complete autonomy. A Jewish Governor is appointed by the Sultan, and he deals with all cases subject to the approval of the Kaid. But the real heads of the communities are the

Rabbis, who have an immense power over the people, whose orthodoxy is so strict and with whom religious forms are observed with most fanatical ardour.

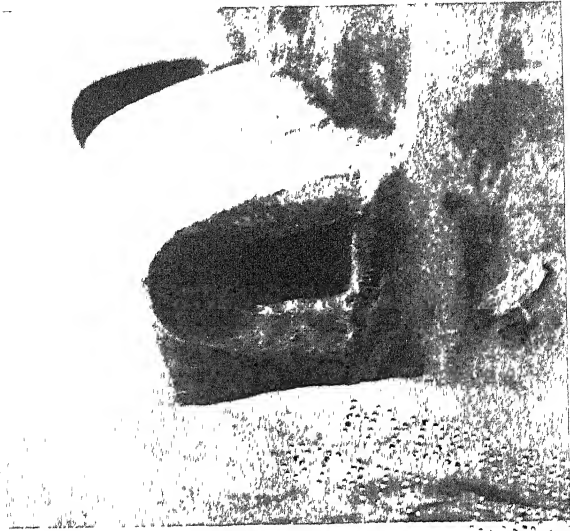
They have borrowed from their masters the numerous Moorish superstitions, including the custom of worshipping saints. Narrow minded in every way, they carry on their religion in a spirit of cruel tolerance. The three most important Mellahs, those of Mogador, Fez, and Marrakesh, are hotbeds of disease, filth, and abject misery. Cooped up within high walls, with no more accommodation to provide for an ever-increasing population, with no place to throw their refuse but in the narrow streets, and, worse still, with the absence of water, the Mellah is at times decimated by a visit of small-pox or fever.

The family life is much more congenial than among the Arabs. The family lives together, and the women receive more consideration. Divorce is a very easy matter, and polygamy, although not much practised, is permissible. A people living for centuries under such deplorable conditions, naturally have legends of the heart-rending cruelties practised upon them. The martyrs have been canonized and become saints of the first



JEWISH BRIDE.

On the eve of marriage the young lady has to sit for hours with her eyes closed



GRAVE OF ZULIKA HACHUAL—THE GIRL MARTYR.

[See page 198.]

water. As with Moors, the tombs of these are visited, and each is a specialist in his way.

At Marrakesh I was taken to the tomb of Rabbi ben Yamin, which is the resort of all disappointed lovers. It appears that the young Rabbi came from far-away Sus to claim his bride. Gifted with a beautiful voice, he was sought after by the Kaid, who offered him many favours to change his religion and become a Muezzin. These offers were refused by the righteous young Rabbi. Not to be baulked by an unbelieving Jew, the Kaid, in a rage, sent his soldiers one day to seize the Rabbi at his home. It was at the time of the Feast of the Jewish New Year, and Rabbi Yamin sat with the family of his future wife round the festive board. The soldiers dragged him from their midst and thrust him into prison. After undergoing horrible tortures for a week, he determined upon a plan to end his agony and defeat the wishes of the Kaid. Pretending to profess the faith of Islam, he promised to make the call to prayer from the Mosque, on the night of the Day of Atonement, while all his co-religionists were returning from their twenty-four hours' devotion in the synagogues.

This news was at once published abroad

accompanied with most insulting phrases. The Jews received it with curses levelled at the once beloved Rabbi Yamin, now the detested apostate.

As the time approached, all Jews, young and old, came to spit and curse at the detested figure when it appeared on the mosque. The affianced bride was thrust in front, where, supported by two old beldames who mocked her, she was to be the first to revile at her degraded intended husband. All was silence, as high up on the tower of the mosque appeared the emaciated figure of Rabbi Yamin. Moors stood by, to mock and jeer at the Jews when the Moslem call to prayer would come from the lips of the reformed Jew; but what was their dismay when the sonorous voice from above, in thrilling tones, called out to the multitude the battle-cry of the Jews, "Hear, O Israel! the Lord our God, the Lord is One!" Hardly had the sound left his lips, when down from the fearful height the young Rabbi threw himself and crashed at the very feet of his poor bride-elect, splashing her feet with his blood.

The Mellah at Fez, when I was there, was in a sad condition. The Jews are entirely at the mercy of the Moorish rabble, and at the slightest

oscillation of the central power they are the first to suffer. The Mellahs are sacked, the men murdered, and the women undergo terrible usage. As soon as Mulai Hafid arrived at Fez he put a stop to the massacres in the Mellah, but as I walked through the dirty streets of that quarter, evidence of the late disturbance was visible on all sides. Harrowing scenes were to be seen in almost every house. I was received most hospitably by the poor down-trodden people. At one place an old man lay in agony on a mat. Could I find him a doctor? He would give all he possessed if I could find one to alleviate his fearful agony from a large knife-wound in the stomach. The only doctor available was a Spaniard, who refused to enter the Mellah, for he was then intriguing to replace the English doctor at the Court of Mulai Hafid, and a visit to the degraded quarter would be detrimental to his cause.

At the house of the Chief Rabbi a most cordial reception was accorded me. His wife and numerous sons and daughters kissed my coat-sleeve as I crossed the threshold. The best in the house was brought for the stranger, and a European armchair was put for me while the others

sat on cushions around me. Sad tales were told of the late trouble, but with the hope of better treatment at the hands of the new Sultan, all faces were bright and happy. From the roof of the house a magnificent view of Fez could be obtained, and there, down at our feet, lay the white stones of the Jewish cemetery. On my expressing a wish to pay it a visit, the old gentleman insisted upon accompanying me himself. There we went, and he told me the story of all the saints, etc. At one white tomb he stopped. In a little niche were the blackened stumps of many candles. Surely this was indeed a saint of importance, for it claimed the most devotees. The old Rabbi sat on the ground by the tomb, stroking his long white beard, as the sun cast deep shadows on his rugged venerable face, and in a voice trembling with enthusiasm he told me of the girl-martyr, Zulika Hachual.

“O stranger! who hast come to my house in peace, from the blessed land of England where my brethren live in happiness, I thank thee for the honour thou hast paid to my house, and I bless thee. You who live in security in your homes surely cannot comprehend the horrors which surround us. But the will of God be

done, and one day the children of Israel shall dwell in peace in Jerusalem. In'shallah!

"It was in the days of the Sultan Abd-er-Rahman—grandfather of Mulai Hassan—that the blessed martyr died for the faith of the sons of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It was seventy-five years ago that she was a girl seventeen years of age and most beautiful to look upon. One unhappy day the lustful eye of the Sultan rested upon the child, and he sent for her. Who can disobey the Sultan? With fear in their hearts, the parents saw her borne away by the cruel soldiers. Brought before the Sultan; he commanded her to become a Mohammedan, for he desired her for his harem.

"A bloodthirsty despot, no one ever dared to disobey his slightest wish. To his surprise, Zulika refused to forswear her faith. She was so good to look upon, his desires prevented him from having her immediately strangled for daring to refuse his commands. As a holy Shereef he could not possess a Jewess. With more than his ordinary patience he said to the trembling girl, 'Know, Zulika, thou standest before thy Sultan, which is sufficient honour for a vile Jewess, but it has pleased me to look

upon thee with a kindly eye and thou must be a "true believer" and thou shalt be first in my harem. Rich apparel shalt thou have and many precious jewels and thou shalt be a "Pearl of Pearls" among the women of my Palace. Nay, shake not thy head and let not the stubbornness of thy race cause me to take thy life, for such will I do if thou wilt not enter the only true faith. Put thy hand on high and declare that God is One the Only and Mahomet is His Prophet.'

"For answer, Zulika raised her dark flashing eyes and bared her white throat and said, 'Sidi (My Lord), here is my throat; cut it now. That is my reply.'

"Then that evil monster's heart was burnt with rage. 'I will show thy race what is the punishment for disobeying the 'Chosen of God,' " he cried.

"One by one, the fingers of her right hand were cut off. Then she was nursed back again to life and strength. Then each joint of that beautiful white body was hacked off, commencing with the fingers, then with the hands, then with the arms, feet, and legs. Between each act of butchery she was treated by the best doctors to keep life in her. At last a half-dead trunk was

carried before the merciless tyrant. Before the eyes of the dying girl were placed the shrivelled and bloody members of her body.

“ ‘Raise thine eyes upward,’ cried the Sultan, ‘and thou shalt yet be spared, for as thou canst not speak it shall be taken as a sign that thou hast accepted the true religion.’

“True to the religion of her fathers to the last, Zulika cast her eyes to the ground, and at a sign from the Sultan her head was struck from her shoulders.

“A deputation from the Mellah, with the Chief Rabbi at the head, prayed the Sultan to return to them what was left of that true daughter of Israel. At night time the remains were lowered by a silken cord from a window in the Palace. The Rabbi who received them was my grandfather. He lies next to Zulika Hachual.”

The old man's head dropped down on his arm that lay across the white tomb. I crept away and left him silently sobbing over the resting-place of the child-martyr.

I glanced back, and there, surrounded by the white mounds of the graves of his people, the black figure of the grief-stricken Rabbi crouched low over the tomb.

All was silent. The olive groves and the bubbling of a hidden brook seemed the emblems of Peace and Goodwill to man, but the high wall of the city cast a long black shadow across the graveyard of the Jews.

I had barely returned to the streets of the Mellah, when a man with his face covered with blood rushed up to me and prostrated himself at my feet and prayed protection from the "good stranger." I looked up the street and saw a Moorish soldier running in our direction. Reaching us he at once commenced kicking the poor wretch who lay on the ground clutching at my knees. So cowed are the Jews that, despite the soldier being entirely alone and in the Jewish quarter, none dared interfere.

With a blow from my riding-whip the brute recoiled. He then clubbed his rifle and rushed at me, but at the sight of my revolver he turned and slunk away like a cur. I had recognized the man as belonging to the company of a Kaid-er-har (a military captain) who was rather friendly with me. This person was not disposed to interfere on behalf of a Jew—but Mulai Hafid's policy to treat the Jews with consideration helped me, and I threatened to put the case before him. I

am pleased to say I saw the cowardly ruffian severely punished.

The sanitary arrangements are the same as in the Moorish quarters, and throughout Morocco they are primitive and disgusting. Skin disease is prevalent, but most of the evils of the Mellah are being eradicated under the influence of the "Alliance Israélite." This philanthropic society has worked wonders in Morocco. At their schools not only is education freely given, but food and clothes, and most important of all, hygiene is a special subject. No praise is sufficient for this society, which does much excellent work.

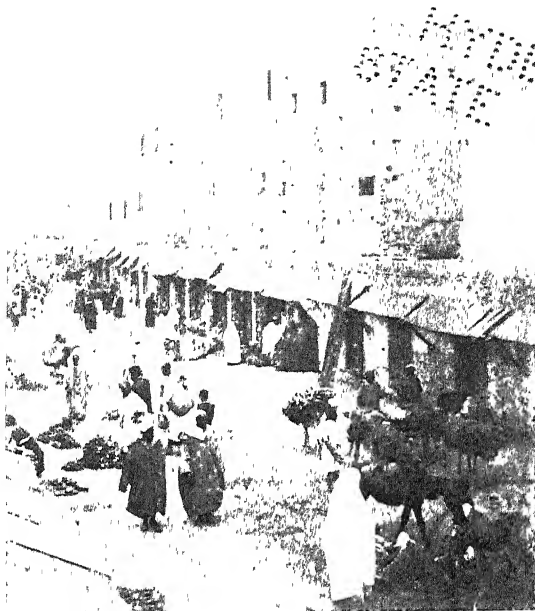
CHAPTER XIII

IMPORTANT INTERVIEW WITH MULAI HAFID

The sacred shadow of the cannon—The army—Mulai Hafid's curious conversation—Seeks my advice—In the Seraglio—Eunuch conducts me through underground passages—Absolem's terror of the Sultan—Show Hafid the *Graphic* with his portrait—Difficulties to explain advertisements—Meet portion of Hafid's harem.

THE rains had swollen the rivers and the country had been most difficult for the couriers—after waiting ten days, the welcome figure of the Rekkas came over the plain and brought us our letters. Among mine were the despatches in reference to the private information I was to obtain for Mulai Hafid, so at once I proceeded to the palace at Bab-el-Bouget.

A deputation of tribesmen were in audience. I waited awhile among the group of Cabinet Ministers squatted on their mats in the shadow of the inner gate at Bab-el-Bouget. Si Abdallah-el-Fasi, Minister for Foreign Affairs, emptied his ink box and graciously offered it to me as a seat.



A STREET IN MOGADISHU.



A STREET IN MOGADISHU.

Gazing upon the sunlit parade-ground it was difficult to realize that the scene before me was set within two hundred miles of Europe. There sat the Ministers of State upon their mats, surrounded by their attendants, yawning the tedious hours away. In the centre of the ground was the Sultan in a portable summer-house arrangement. From beneath a row of cannon on one side rose the plaintive cry of "A'llah M'Sidi ! A'llah M'Sidi !" uttered by two or three poor wretches who importuned the Sultan for justice. The shadow of these guns is sacred, and no man who succeeds in taking refuge there can be turned away until the Sultan has attended to his case, or delegated it to the attention of a Minister. In the huge enclosure, the Haraba (English instructors) moved the troops in elementary evolutions. The kaleidoscope effect of the troops, in their many-coloured and dilapidated uniforms, was very picturesque and also—very funny.

Men and boys of all shapes, sizes, colours, and ages, armed with guns of many patterns and even sticks, were being marched about in vain endeavour to impart some idea of drill. The soldiers had not the slightest interest in the proceedings, and are ignorant of anything connected with military

evolutions. The reports that the wild Arab and terrible Berber of Morocco are unconquerable, is a fallacy. As fighting men they are immeasurably inferior to any trained and disciplined troops. From time to time the Haraba made frantic endeavours to attract the attention of the Sultan by bringing the troops up in front of him. The band battered out "God save the King" to the general salute. The Sultan, however, was engaged, and feigned not to notice them. Several times the operation was repeated, until finally the tormented monarch, losing all patience, sent a message to the instructor to "take the troops away as he could not hear himself speak."

Eventually the deputation of tribesmen withdrew, and I was immediately sent for. Mulai Hafid was pleased with my inquiries, and it appeared he had received a batch of correspondence. He first handed me letters from important personages, whom I will not name. They contained propositions which Mulai Hafid regarded as monstrous. Rarely had I seen him so discomposed, and I advised him to burn them. That item disposed of to his satisfaction, the next was brought forward. They were the drafts of the Franco-Spanish Note. Before discussing the items,

the Sultan explained that on no account was I to send anything to my paper in regard to this interview. "It is quite a private matter, and I am asking your opinion of all these affairs before I consult my Viziers. This is just a conversation on the subject, and my ultimate decision depends upon circumstances."

As Mulai Hafid's decision is now old news, this conversation, which for the first time is here published, is interesting and important, for it shows how little it required to upset all the previous arrangements, and if the Sultan had not changed his opinions, he would never have been recognized by the Powers.

I was surprised to find Mulai Hafid so utterly ignorant, almost every item of the Note had to be carefully explained. The money matters troubled him most. "What?" he cried, "pay indemnities? If some Frenchmen are murdered in England, does France send soldiers to burn villages and destroy towns and then demand money of your King Edward? I can see what they want to do. They see I am helpless and depend upon the recognition of the Powers, and they impose terms that will cripple me.

"If I refuse the Note they have the excuse

to fight and take the country from me. If I accept the Note I will be entirely in their power. What is the good of a bankrupt Sultan? Where am I to get the money? You know that I have none. My soldiers are without pay and grumble. There is little money in the country, and the tribes bring very small sums. I am losing all patience, and if things continue as they do—well, let them come and take my country and make an end of it all! I cannot and will not agree to the terms of the Note. As for Aziz, my brother, it is proposed I should make him a suitable allowance of the sum of ten thousand English sovereigns a year. It is his extravagance that has caused all this trouble, and I must give him such a sum—it is all absurd, ridiculous.”

I pointed out that no sum was specified. “M’zien,” said Mulai Hafid, with a bitter smile, “I will look after my brother, leave that to me.” The tone in which this was said made me feel thankful that I was not a brother of a Sultan of Morocco.

“Tell me,” he commanded, “why has Germany sent to me first? What does she want? I cannot accept this Note, and I feel inclined to place myself entirely in her hands. Then she will go to war

with France. I have been assured that she would win, and I prefer any country but France to be here. England has deserted me. I would have placed myself entirely under her protection if she would have come to me ; but Germany is the only one who gives me counsel. Now tell me what you think ! Can Germany help me ? ”

The situation was becoming too critical for my liking. I had come to Fez in the ordinary capacity of a journalist, to obtain an interview and make a few sketches only, and here was I being consulted on most important international questions. Driven into a corner, Mulai Hafid was desperate. Without doubt he had been assured that Germany would stand by him and go to war if necessary. He firmly believed that the Casa-Blanca incident had been arranged, to give a pretext for the coming fight between France and Germany. Public opinion in those countries was very high, and by throwing in his lot with Germany he would precipitate matters. A European war would be his only safeguard, and all his exertions were strained to bring it about. But he was nervous and only half trusted Germany, and on my answer to his question much depended. It was imperative for me to endeavour as much as possible to try

and influence the wavering and uncertain mind of the Sultan. At that time he had no other person to speak disinterestedly on the subject. He was surrounded on all sides by persons who had their "axes to grind." He perfectly knew that his hastily appointed viziers were incapable men. The Glowî was at Marrakesh, so he could not consult him, and Menehbi at Tangier, he distrusted. The consuls each had their own particular policy to follow, and I was the only disinterested person at Fez.

After due consideration I began : "In answer to your Majesty's question respecting Germany,—well, Germany's action in sending Dr. Vassel was precipitate. Germany cannot help you without risking a European war." Mulai Hafid's eyes glistened at this. "But that she will not do," I added.

"Why not? Why not?" he asked. "Her army is bigger and stronger than that of France! I know that—I have been assured so."

"Your Majesty will understand," I answered, "that Germany has many matters to attend to in other parts of the world. If trouble arose elsewhere, she would at once leave you to fight your own battles as best you could."

“Then what am I to do in regard to France?” demanded the Sultan.

I replied, “France is your neighbour, and your Moorish proverb says, ‘*Atlah el jar kebel eddar ; wa er-rafeek kabel-et-tareek*’” (“Seek the neighbour before the house and the companions before the road”). The Moors dearly love an apt proverb, and the Sultan does not differ from his subjects in this respect. He was evidently pleased with this lucky shot.

“Explain your meaning more fully,” he said with a smile. This success gave me more confidence and I continued with much assurance.

“France is your neighbour in Algeria. If you require help at any time, a neighbour is nearest and most likely to come to your aid ; but if that neighbour is an enemy, what can you do in the far away borders of your kingdom? As your Majesty is fully aware, the tribes on the Algero-Moroccan frontier, being very turbulent, give many excuses for the French to march into your country. As friendly neighbours they will help you. As enemies every pretext will enable them to encroach further inland, and who knows what the end will be? Now, please your Majesty, this is the reason for the proverb.”

The Sultan sat with a moody brow. In silence I watched him, wondering what was passing through his mind. Had my argument turned him from throwing in his lot with Germany, and thus embroiling the whole matter, and perhaps causing a European war? At last he spoke.

“I am pleased with your words and thank you. Perhaps you speak what is the truth, but I like not the French and I have no faith in them, and”—here he made a pause—“whom can I trust and put faith in? No! I will not accept the Note! But wait—we will see—leave me now and come again, for I want you.”

With a hearty shake of the hand he gave me permission to retire. As I passed through the servants and attendant crowd of viziers and their army of servants and hangers on, I noticed on this occasion also, that Dr. Vassel and Ben Gebritt were in attendance, waiting for an interview with the Sultan.

The subsequent interviews, which I need not put in detail, gave me a remarkable insight into the intrigues by which Mulai Hafid was surrounded. Dr. Vassel and Ben Gebritt daily visited the Palace. In the evenings the Sultan sent for me,

and the events of the day were recounted for my consideration.

As time went on, the admirable arguments of Ben Gebritt bore fruit, and Mulai Hafid became more friendly disposed to the French ; but to the very last moment he could not reconcile himself to accept the "Note" in full.

About this time another attack of dysentery laid me prostrate, and for a few days I could not attend the Palace. One evening a Makhezni came about eight o'clock with a message that I *must* try and come to see the Sultan. Still very weak, I took Absolem with me to lean on his strong arm. He was most delighted at the chance of seeing the Sultan, and made a very careful toilet. I also took with me a copy of the *Graphic* which had just arrived with my report and illustrations of my first interview with Mulai Hafid.

We approached the Palace by quite a different way. The Palace and its various enclosures cover two or three square miles. Mulai Hafid changes his quarters frequently. He evidently has good reason for so doing. This time he was in the portion containing the Harem.

The entrance gate was kept by an old ragged man, who cleaned the rubbish from a corner and

gave me an old armchair to sit upon. He then called a black slave, who motioned me to follow him. We crossed a courtyard strewn with all kinds of litter. A door, with bolts three feet long, was opened and we passed into a passage. The flickering light of the candle carried by the eunuch, disclosed a series of massive arches and substantial walls forming a tortuous labyrinth through which we carefully picked our way. Every now and then another great door was unbolted for us to pass through. They shut with an ominous clang behind us. As the huge rusty bolts were thrust into their sockets I wondered why any one should voluntarily choose such a vocation as that of Sultan. At last we were ushered into a spacious vault-like hall. A smoky German lamp in one corner cast fantastic shadows from the tall pillars which supported the great arabesque arches. On the inevitable yellow sofa sat the Sultan. We were left alone with his Majesty.

Absolem, who had been showing signs of nervousness for some time, almost collapsed. It was the first time he had been in the presence of the Sultan. As he walked across the beautiful tiled floor, his lips trembled and his legs almost failed him. Three paces from the Sultan he

dropped on his knees, and placing his forehead on the ground whispered his obeisance. I then explained the reason of his presence.

Mulai Hafid regretted exceedingly the necessity for having to send for me and begged me to be seated. It was evident that he was in a good humour and his mind at rest.

He spoke kindly to Absolem, who was much overcome by the "Presence," and knelt on the floor, three paces to the right of me. The Sultan then told me that he had determined to accept the "Note" in full, and quite agreed that it was necessary for him to be friendly with the French. "Now," he said, "surely the Powers will acknowledge me. Do you think it will be soon?"

I replied that as soon as his acceptance of the "Note" was received, the Doyen of the European Ministers at Tangier would bring him official recognition. He was in exceedingly good humour now, and a most opportune moment for me to produce the *Graphic*. He had ordered twelve special copies, and these I handed to him. Eagerly he opened the pages and I had to sit by him and make the necessary explanations.

The supplement containing the portrait and double-page illustration was a source of great

delight and satisfaction. It can easily be understood how important these pages of printed matter were to Mulai Hafid. Although seated on the Shereefian throne, he was by no means firmly established. The European Powers had not recognized him as such, but here was an important English journal with his portrait marked "Mulai Hafid, Sultan of Morocco." It was the first time he had seen himself in print. He now felt that it was possible he would eventually retain the position he aspired to.

With beaming countenance he bade me show him every picture in this "magnificent and important journal." It was this paper which had first given him so publicly the title which he feverishly sought. Slowly he turned from page to page, every illustration must be explained. I soon found that every person pictured there must be King, Prince, or noble; otherwise interest lagged. Fortunately, the first few pages contained photos of Royal personages. These were examined with a large magnifying glass.

After explaining the picture of John Burns, and finding the page turned over abruptly as soon as it became evident that the subject was not of royal blood, I created nobility on every page.

Rows of portraits had to be ennobled, but when it came to the advertisements, well! I did my best, but the situation bristled with difficulties.

The policemen and children in "Fry's Cocoa" were safely negotiated and a new peer unofficially added to the list. The *décolletée* "Tatcho" lady became a princess, but a frightful pitfall was awaiting me. "Who is this?" came the question. "This" was the well-known monkey in "Monkey Brand Soap," sitting in evening dress on the front of a railway engine!—I was forced into it.—Really it wasn't my fault—but—I had to give him a title.

The ordeal was over, the last page turned. Mulai Hafid was delighted. *His* portrait was bigger than any other in *The Graphic*. "M'zien, M'zien. You are very clever," he said. "You shall go to King Edward with a letter from me, and also go to the Emperor of Germany." He went on in this strain for some time—I dared not interrupt—but I smiled to myself at the idea. Fortunately, I was saved from replying, for a black slave approached with a bowl containing scented water. It was dinner-time, and Mulai Hafid washed his hands preparatory to his evening meal. No knives, forks, or spoons are used in Morocco by

the Moors. Even the Sultan uses only his hands for conveying the food to his mouth.

With a smile and a handshake, he intimated that the audience was at an end.

Once clear of the Palace, Absolem went into transports of delight. Almost dancing with joy and relief, he exclaimed, "Sidna (our Lord) loves you, O my Master! you will indeed be very great! I am glad I sought protection in your shadow. The Sultan will surely send me some beautiful clothes. He has shown you special favour to-night. For never does one enter the part of the Palace reserved for the women. I should think you are the first Christian who has ever been in the Harem of the Sultan."

"But I haven't seen any of the women, Absolem, so there is no harm done. Where are they kept, do you know? and how many are there of them?"

"Well, Sidi," he replied, "no man but the Sultan and the eunuchs ever enters that part of the Palace. Ah! the Sultan is lucky—there might be hundreds of women there. The Kaids send him all the nice girls as presents, and he has a fine lot sent from the East. Every colour and of all races, but our religion only allows four lawful wives, and the others are concubines."

And so we chatted as we rode through the dark streets after this unique experience. As we turned a corner, a strange sight presented itself. A cavalcade of shrouded figures guarded by armed men on foot, was coming along the streets in our direction. The dim light of a few lanterns showed them to be a party of girls from some rich harem. Here was a chance, thought I, of having a good peep at them as they passed, and I drew up close to the wall to allow them to pass. But we had been seen. With scant courtesy a flash, a report, and a shot whistled over our heads. Whatever could this mean? Quite angry at this outrage, I advanced into the middle of the street, when two of the foremost men rushed up, turned our horses, and despite my remonstrances and Absolem's explanation of my identity, we were roughly ordered to turn our backs and ride to the end of the street, "In the name of Mulai Hafid."

"In the name of Mulai Hafid"—these words explained all to Absolem, although I was still utterly confounded by this strange behaviour. As I heard the party approach, I turned my head. Bang! went a gun, and I resumed my former position, but not before I had caught sight of a pair of large dark eyes, glancing curiously in my

direction. The owner of these lovely eyes was quite a young girl, seated on a richly caparisoned mule. She was shrouded in white drapery folds, with just a narrow opening across the upper part of her face, allowing the eyes to be free. For quite five minutes we stood thus facing the wall, while the cavalcade trotted by, when the heads of our horses were released, and we were allowed to continue our way home. "Whatever was that, Absolem?" I said. Absolem was in rather a nervous state, and anxious to reach home.

For a time he spurred on, very anxious to put as much distance between himself and that mysterious party. At last he drew up at our door, and not till we were inside, and the strong iron bolts were thrust into their places, did he speak.

"Sidi," he said in almost a whisper, "did you not hear? Did you not know that was some of Mulai Hafid's women, and we were lucky to come back alive? At night-time, when all is dark, they go for a ride; if any one meets them, they must at once turn and ride quickly away.

"Those guards are the most cruel men in Morocco, and shoot any person who approaches their party. If I had not called out quickly

your name, our bodies would have been lying in the road. That is the reward for a glance from the eyes of a lady of the Sultan."

Under the circumstances I consider I had got off pretty cheaply and made a mental note that, in the future, I would avoid meeting these precious ladies.

Considering the tortuousness of the streets and the absolute darkness prevailing at night-time, it is rather a difficult matter to know whom you might meet. In the future, when Fez has a Local Government body and a County Council I should certainly recommend that when the ladies are taking their evening constitutional, a man with a red flag should march some distance in front, as they did before the steam rollers, to prevent accidents. Ladies are very nice to meet in the dark, but not under those circumstances.

CHAPTER XIV

MY DEPARTURE FROM FEZ

Jealousy of officials—Ben Sliman poisoned—I am cowardly assaulted—Aid-el-Kebir—Difficulty to obtain animals—No ammunition—Attack expected on the road—Change my route and go over the mountains—The meeting with the brigands—The “Sebou”—Surrounded by fanatics—Miss Ford at river—Animal washed away—Miserable condition of party.

ABSOLEM had installed in my house a little gamin of Fez called Hamet. He was the drudge and “maid of all work.” His wages were a quarter of a dollar a week (about sevenpence halfpenny) and all he could steal from the kitchen. Quite a character was this child. When he was first appointed to his important post, his costume consisted of a dirty shirt and a red fez, but now he was quite smart, in one of my old coats and a pair of old boots. He was quite proud of his personal appearance in his new clothes, and many times during the day he would be hanging over the pond in the garden to admire himself. It was not a very good fit—that coat of mine—but he would by no

means turn those sleeves back. No! flop, flop, flop, he would come in my boots, four sizes too big for him, and salute with the ends of the sleeves hanging six inches over his hands. Proud as he was of this fine addition to his wardrobe, they were all removed when he left the house, and out in the street he went with only that old shirt and dirty red cap. Hamet declared that "if he ventured in the streets wearing the coat and boots of a N'zerani he would be killed by the other boys." This little hopeful washed the crockery, cleaned the boots, and did his numerous other jobs, incessantly singing the most popular song of the Fasis, with this most expressive chorus:—

"The Lord of the Christians to the hook,
The Lord of the Jews to the Spit,
Our Lord to Paradise,

• And we will bear witness in his favour."

These words are characteristic of the attitude of the Fasis towards all foreigners. When the Europeans first came to Fez, stern orders were given to the Governor of the town to punish severely all who insulted the strangers. After a few had been beaten to death for spitting at Europeans and shouting insulting remarks about

their ancestors and the ladies of their family, the custom dropped slightly out of fashion. But this attitude still exists, and if not too openly shown—it can be plainly noticed as you pass along the streets.

On Christmas day, Hardwick and I did our utmost to keep up the traditions of the time. The sun was very hot and the sky was intensely blue, so we dispensed with the idea of snow.

I had brought with me an old accordion and to its accompaniment we sang all the Christmas carols we could think of. As I could only play the first bars of "There is a green hill," that had to suffice for each tune, varied at times by Hardwick, whose only accomplishment on the instrument was to imitate the different hoots of motor cars and motor bicycles. Still—we sang the hymns and carols to these accompaniments, and if from a musician's standpoint they were not artistic—we passed a pleasant Christmas morning.

I was having a most pleasant time now. Almost every day at the garden at the Palace, finishing the portrait of the Sultan in water-colours. Only for two or three days were the sittings interrupted, when Mulai Hafid had a severe cold. It was then very curious to see this

monarch in a small room bending over a diminutive charcoal fire, shivering with cold, and spreading his hands over the small stove that only gave inadequate heat.

At one of these interviews an incident occurred which exposed the truly Oriental side of his character.

The Sultan was taking huge quantities of snuff to ease, as he thought it would, a rather bad attack of toothache.

It appears he had ordered a slave to bring the dentist to attend to the royal molars. The poor black, unaware that a Spanish dentist had arrived in Fez and had been appointed to the Court, produced a native operator. This gentleman entered the Sultan's presence and calling down the blessings of A'llah upon his Royal patient, produced the implements of his craft. These consisted of a rope, presumably to bind his patient, a huge pair of iron pincers, and other strange and cumbersome tools.

Mulai Hafid rose up in a rage. "You son of a dog! Do you think I am a horse that you bring me a farrier?" he cried, to the trembling slave. "Do you think I have hoofs to be shod? Take him away."

The poor wretch was instantly seized and removed to a distance, so that I should not hear his shrieks as his back was torn open by the lash.

Much excitement prevailed about this time. Si Abdelkerim-ben-Sliman, the Foreign Minister of Abdul Aziz, had been invited by Mulai Hafid to come to Fez, and was expected every day. He was a great favourite with the Fasis, and I accompanied the deputation that went out to meet him. When he arrived, he was received with great honour by the Sultan, and all Fez was delighted. A more charming man I have never met, and when, three days after his arrival, his mysterious death was announced, I shared in the horror that prevailed in the city at the ominous news. Murmurs of discontent were heard on all sides. Foul play was hinted at, and the subsequent outrage on his body confirmed the suspicion. The Sultan made a great show at the funeral, which was calculated to allay suspicion. The body of the ill-fated old gentleman was but twenty-four hours in its last resting-place, when it was dug up, the head cut off and given to the dogs. Everybody was shocked at this sacrilege. With the body

thus dismembered a Mohammedan cannot enter Paradise. Popular opinion laid this outrage at the instigation of Mulai Hafid, who promptly had four poor wretches beaten to death and their bodies given to the dogs. The heads of these unfortunates were hung up over the gates as a proof of the Sultan's justice. Ugh! what a country!

I thought it was time for me to get back home to civilization. As soon as the portrait of the Sultan was finished I informed him of my intention. He would not hear of it, and I must stay with him and accompany him to Rabat, where he was going in a few weeks' time. I should have done so, had I not been subjected to a dastardly outrage.

The great success I had with the Sultan, and the unusual preference shown to me, were the cause for much jealousy and envy among the officials at Fez, including the Harabas. I had been constantly threatened, and had experienced no few inconveniences from this cause. The presence of Hardwick had prevented any serious attempt being made to molest me.

His big revolver, which he had shown he could use with wonderful precision, deterred

them from chancing an open conflict. In an unlucky moment I had consented to his leaving Fez in the company of a friend who was returning to Tangier. He left on January 1, 1909. The day after this I was attacked. I had been out to the market to buy some necessities, for Ben Gebritt was to pay me a visit in the afternoon. On my return to the house I was cowardly assaulted by ten soldiers. My revolver was of little use. Two shots only could I fire when I was felled to the ground by a terrific blow on the head from behind. Once on the ground, the cowardly ruffians literally jumped upon me. Fortunately, I was rescued by the Harabas, who were probably party to the cowardly affair, for, although in the same house, they did not hurry themselves to my help. Luckily, the Governor of the Town was passing the door of the house at the time and, hearing the tumult, ordered his Khalifa to inquire into the matter. Then occurred the most disgraceful farce that could be imagined. Hadj Tahar Mokwar, the native British agent, was sent for. He arrived with all the pomp of Oriental bumptiousness.

Utterly unfit to hold such a position ; he was only a native, and afraid to endanger his own

position. He made a great show of taking evidence and so-forth. During all this time I stood with blood streaming down my face, and hardly able to speak from the pain in my throat, which was injured in the attempts of the ruffians to strangle me as I lay on the ground.

Nothing could be done with Hadj Tahar, and the Khalifa kindly gave me his seat, ordered everybody away, and promised to do for me everything that lay in his power.

Dr. Wilkinson, the doctor of the Sultan, kindly attended to my wounds. The next day I went to Mulai Hafid. He was most furious when he heard of the outrage, and assured me that I should be present myself at the punishment of the ruffians. I thanked him for his kindness, and once more informed him of my determination to leave Fez. He expressed his sorrow at the occurrence, and agreed that under the circumstances he could not ask me to prolong my visit, but I was to come and see him before my departure.

El Hadj had gone to Tangier with his mules, and I now found great difficulty to procure animals for the journey. The greatest religious

festival of the year, Aid-el-Kebir, had just commenced. No Moor would travel during the first three days, and almost every animal in the town was commandeered by the Makhzen for the approaching journey of the Sultan to Rabat. After much trouble five animals were hired at an exorbitant price, and on Tuesday I was to start.

While Absolem prepared the shwaris and procured provisions for the journey, I made my final calls. I duly saw punished the men who had assaulted me, and had my last interview with the Sultan. He was most kind, presenting me with the usual presents, and also a special one for the director of my paper. Before leaving him, he expressed a wish that I should not make any claim at the Legation in Tangier, as it would be injurious to his cause at that moment. This I promised—although much against my will.

When all was ready for my departure I remembered that my revolver, which had been stolen by one of the soldiers, had been taken to the British agent. I went at once to Hadj Tahar. To my surprise that gentleman refused to return it to me, and I had to procure witnesses to prove

it belonged to me. He knew perfectly well that it was mine, but a European revolver is highly prized by a Moor, and mine was a fine automatic Colt. He could not be prevailed upon to part with it. All sorts of excuses he put forward. First of all, "I had fired it in the city, therefore it must be confiscated." Considering that shots are heard at all times in the city, this argument was rather weak, and that excuse to retain it was not good enough. Then, "Firearms were not required," he said. "The road was safe." At last I threatened a claim at the Legation at Tangier and leave a written statement with Dr. Vassel to state that if I were killed on the road, it was because the British agent assured me that all was safe and retained my firearms. This frightened him considerably, and at once he offered to lend me three old rifles for my journey. But the revolver, he wanted that. After more threats he promised to send it to the Legation at Tangier if I would give him a written statement saying I made no claim whatsoever. As this was the only chance of ever seeing back my revolver, I wrote out a protest and left him to send it on. On Tuesday morning, the 5th January, I started on my homeward trip.

We left the gates of Fez at eight in the morning, a small caravan of five animals and five persons. The muleteer, a sullen fellow named Mohammed, and his boy walked behind the two most heavily laden mules. Absolem and L'Arbi rode on the packs and I rode the only saddle animal. L'Arbi was a friend of Absolem who had come up to Fez from Tangier with a European; not liking Fez he asked my permission to come back as my servant. He proved the jolliest boy imaginable and his good spirits helped considerably to make the long journey less tedious. At Tangier he was employed as a local guide for the tourists, and had picked up a curious kind of pigeon English.

The last moment before starting, I had borrowed a small revolver with only two cartridges with which to pass through a dangerous country, at a rather critical period, viz. the Aid-el-Kebir. This was the second day of the feast, and the previous day the opening ceremony had been performed by the Sultan. In the courtyard of the 'Dar Makhzen, in full view of the crowd of Wazirs, Grandees, Kaids, and as many as could crowd in the courtyard, the Sultan cut the throat of a sheep. The animal was then seized by a special negro of the palace, who rushed at full



MR. "BIBI" CARLTON.

[See page 251.]



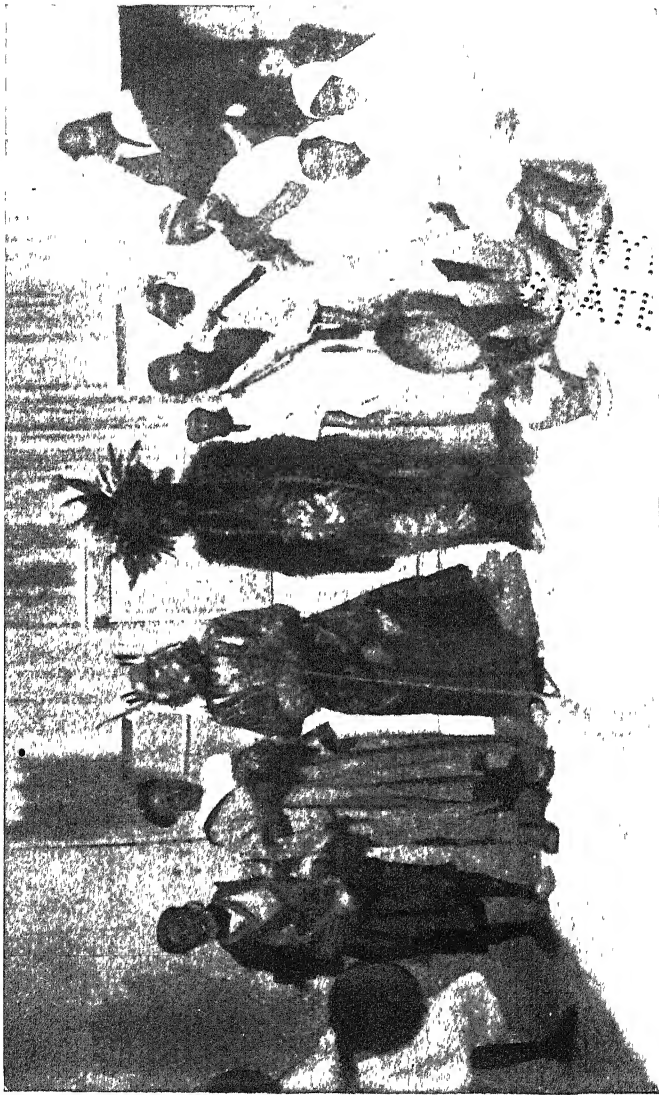
speed to the shrine of Mulai Edriss. If he arrives with the animal still alive, then the ensuing year will be a "lucky one" for the Sultan. If the animal is dead on arriving, the unlucky negro shares its fate. It is needless to add that by a judicious compressing of the arteries of the wretched animal, it arrived at the shrine alive. For three days after this, the killing of sheep continues. Every family has its one or more sheep to kill. The skins are stripped off and donned by the fanatical populace, who dance around the streets covered in the trophies reeking with blood.

I had been warned not to travel during this festival, but I preferred to chance the open road and get away from Fez after my late uncomfortable experience. For an hour after leaving Fez we proceeded on the ordinary route, but I had fully expected designs to waylay me on my journey and determined to turn sharply to the right and take the less frequented route, through the territory of the Ouled D'jamaa. It was with difficulty that I persuaded Mohammed the muleteer to take that route. The Djebala and Riffians who inhabit that region were in open revolt, and it was considered most dangerous. He assured

me that the hills were infested with brigands, and we would all be killed. But I was not to be deterred, for that route was the quickest, and I should save some eight hours, which practically meant a day's journey. I wanted to get to Tangier as quickly as possible, and a brigand more or less, when I should have six or seven days of them, would make very little difference. I certainly should have felt safer if I had more firearms, for I was badly off in that respect.

Our progress was rather slow going over the steep hills. Absolem and L'Arbi were in a perfect state of terror, and the grumbling muleteer constantly threatened to turn back. Every tree in the distance was sure to have a lurking brigand behind it, every rock was a shelter for a fierce band of Riffians, till their complaints got so on my nerves, I rode well ahead to be out of earshot. About four hours from Fez, the first incident occurred, the sequel of which would be invaluable to W. S. Gilbert in his next opera.

The sun was high in the heavens and our hoods pulled well over our faces to screen us from its scorching heat. Absolem was the first to see them. "Sidi, Sidi," he cried, "A'llah! A'llah! here they come! we are lost!—yes—sure enough." Down



THE "SHEEP FEAST"

the slope of the hill were coming, at a hand gallop, a troop of wild-looking horsemen, shouting and firing their arms in true powder-play fashion : a really most magnificent sight.

Absolem came close to my side, terror stricken, but L'Arbi proved himself quite a "brick."

"All right, Guv'nor," he said in English. "Goddam—I speak with the dem peoples. No 'fraid."

We were soon surrounded by the horsemen who demanded the reason why we dare ride through their country. L'Arbi acted as spokesman, and if I had not been really very anxious I should have burst out laughing at his cool lies.

He explained that I was the Sultan's doctor travelling down to the coast to fetch medicines. I must not be delayed a moment or the Sultan would come and eat up the tribe that dared delay his doctor. Then these "terrible brigands" made many apologies, and escorted us up the hill. The leader of the party assured me that further on I should find the tribe of the Beni-Sadden very hostile, and I ought to have guns for my servants. He then offered to sell me two old flint-locks, which perforce I had to buy. Powder and bullets I could not have ; in fact, they were only selling the guns

in order to buy powder for themselves. At the bottom of the hill they left us. Absolem and L'Arbi were in fine spirits now. They made as much show as possible of their powderless guns, which in fact proved a great help—the mere sight of the long barrels being sufficient protection. The longer the barrel, the better the protection. I did not regret the bargain, for one of the guns had the word “Jehad” (Holy war) inlaid in pearl on the stock. The gun was made for the “holy cause” of driving the Christians out of Morocco, and probably I was the only European that possessed such a curious weapon.

After about eight hours' ride we arrived at the banks of the Ouad Sebou, and pitched our tent in the Makhzen N'zella at a small village. We were received with scowls, until L'Arbi forced respect for my person by declaring that I was the Sultan's doctor, and during my whole journey I had to keep up that character, which at times caused me considerable embarrassment.

It had been difficult to buy provisions at Fez. Absolem had only procured two skinny fowls, a pound of rice, and six round loaves of bread, and I had a half-pound bottle of Bovril as an extra delicacy. The villagers are generally pleased to

sell fowls and eggs to travellers, so we fully expected to be able to find food on the journey. Absolem cooked very well, and one of the fowls and half the rice made a delicious stew. We were all tired, and about 10 p.m. went to bed. I slept on an old camp bed, removing only my spurs and belt. Absolem and L'Arbi lay on the ground beside me, the muleteer and the boy sleeping outside to guard the animals. The first day's journey is always fatiguing, and despite the hullabaloo of the festive-making villagers we were soon all in the arms of Morpheus.

It seemed but a short time I had been sleeping, when a terrific shouting woke me up with a start. Putting my head outside the tent, a fearful sight met my eyes. In the moonlight a crowd of raving fanatics were dancing round the tent, cursing the Christian. Among them were five or six gruesome-looking figures dressed entirely in sheepskins reeking with blood. The head of the animal was entire, and was tied in position on the top of the heads of the men whose faces were covered with horrible masks. The shrieking and yelling was deafening and made the night hideous. I strode out of the tent and called loudly for the headman of the village, but was

answered with derisive yells. Absolem called me back. "Let them alone, Sidi," he said. "It is the third night of the feast, and the worst. They are mad now, and it is better to keep quiet. They will keep this up for a few hours, and perhaps will not venture to attack us. The only danger is that they will loosen the animals and cause them to stampede. If that happens and we lose the animals, then we will never get to Tangier. Let us watch carefully." So there we sat in the door of the tent with the unearthly scene before us. After a while our worst fears were realized. The animals became restive—a tug by one and a tug by another, and away scampered the animals across the plain accompanied by the shouts and laughter from the yelling dancers. There was only one thing to do—to chance the tent being looted and go after the animals. Taking my rusty revolver, Absolem, I, and the boy started out in the cold night to try and catch the mules. L'Arbi and Mohammed stayed behind to guard the tent, making a great display of the long-barrelled, but powderless guns I had bought in the morning. The moon was bright and the animals tired, and luckily after half an hour's chasing we got the beasts all back and properly tethered once more.

There was no more sleep for us that night, and at three in the morning we broke camp and started to trek. The village was quiet now and the revellers, tired out, slept in their thatched huts—our guards (?) were awakened to receive their money, but refused to walk the few hundred yards to the Ouad Sebou to show us the ford. The river was swollen with the late rains, and the ford difficult, but Mohammed professed his great knowledge of the river, and we urged the animals into the strong running water.

How I afterwards regretted urging those sagacious brutes! Much better to have been guided by their unerring instinct, for after spurring and beating them, they were at last forced to enter the river, and in a few moments we were all struggling in a deep whirling current. What a fearful quarter of an hour it was to struggle back to the bank! Wet through to the skin, we at last succeeded, but alas! one animal with all its baggage was gone for ever; dragged down by its load, the poor beast was lying somewhere in the depths of the river.

We gained nothing by our early rising—for two hours we walked up and down the banks until a native came along and showed us the ford.

Miserable and wet we continued our journey over the jagged ridges of the hills. The cool wind of the morning chilled us to the bones. A dreary march was that. Despite my assurance to pay in full for the lost mule, Mohammed grumbled and cursed continually. Absolem had caught a severe cold and lay on the pack-saddle, moaning and crying that he would never see "his beloved Tangier again."

At last the moon grew paler and paler, the stars gradually faded behind the dark blue mountains to the east, and a warm red glow tinged the sky with pink. Higher and higher it rose, and the cold grey turned into a golden hue. The sun rose and every minute increased in strength till it burned down and warmed us with its welcome glow. The same heat that we enjoyed, burnt a fever into the blood of Absolem, and his groans increased. I dosed him with quinine, but he grew worse and prayed me to let him dismount. "Leave me to die here," he moaned.

I lost patience with him. He was certainly a bit of a coward, and it was with difficulty that I compelled him to stay on his mule. We now moved over an undulating, thinly populated tableland. Except for an occasional thatched village, which we avoided, with its few acres of tilled

ground, the country was most desolate—long green expanses of dwarf palms and gorse in dreary infinite monotonous succession, through which appear in patches, large stony places.

Mohammed said we ought to reach the river Wargra in six hours, then push on to Hit Ktoot which was a government N'zella and we could put up in safety for the night. Six hours of weary marching—seven hours, and still we had no sight of the river. Where are we? Absolem was very bad. Even L'Arbi commenced swearing at Mohammed—he had lost his way. Ha! a rekkas is seen in the distance. “Go, L'Arbi, ask him the way.”

L'Arbi comes back to say we are on the wrong track, and we must alter our course after crossing the river. Three more weary hours and we came to the banks of the Wargra. What a relief it was to dismount and stretch our stiffened joints! The animals were unloaded and allowed to roll about while we broke our fast. Absolem lay groaning and could eat nothing. L'Arbi and the boy collected a few sticks to make a fire, and soon the kettle was merrily boiling. A few hard-boiled eggs, some hard, dry bread, and a cup of green tea made a most delicious repast, for we had tasted

nothing since morning. For an hour we rested and then, all ready, we made an easy crossing and are off to our camping-place for the night. There was Hit Ktoot, a high mountain in the distance. Could we reach it before sundown? Mohammed was doubtful, the animals tired, and so were he and the boy, for they had walked the whole distance. We pushed on and one hour after another passed and still Hit Ktoot is blue in the distance—we were a long way off. Another hour and the blue changed, and we could distinguish the brown patches on the side of the hill getting nearer and nearer. Could we do it before sundown? We still dragged on—ah! that settled it—a mule falls—the poor beast is exhausted. Mohammed cursed, he swore I would kill all the animals and he refused to go to Hit Ktoot. “We must take our chance and put up at the first village we come to.” I offered him extra money. “No, the animals cannot do it.” A half-hour is lost in taking off the pack of the fallen mule and putting it on again, and then on we went till we came to a little village in the dip of a hill.

Tired and exhausted we rode up to the huts, but before we could dismount, the headman rushed out and demanded our business. Mohammed

explained the situation. "We want no travellers here, go your way; this is not a Makhzen N'zella—you can't stop here."

This was final. To stop against the will of the villagers meant disaster. So once more we moved on, our animals stumbling at almost every step. We finally arrived at the next village after another hour's journey over the hill.

We straggled into the village, and could positively get no further. The animals dropped down under their loads. The headman refused to have us, but it was useless. The sun had set and we could go no further. We pitched our tent outside the village.

CHAPTER XV

JOURNEY TO TANGIER

Mohammed loses the track—Fight at the village—The Shereef of Wazzan and his English wife—Alkazar—"Bibi" Carlton—Through dangerous country—A gruesome meeting—At a village with Raisuli's men—I doctor the natives—Night-riders—Meet with Bou Hamara, the Pretender—Tangier.

OUR position was anything but pleasant; the camp was without the protecting thorn hedge of a N'zella and the sullen villagers had retired to their huts. But we were all so thankful to be in camp after the long, tedious day's ride that we were quite jolly—all except Absolem, who lay in the tent groaning.

After much trouble and paying double the price, Mohammed managed to buy food for the animals, but could get nothing for us. Not an egg would they sell us for the next day's march. So we "made hay while the sun shone," and determined to have a good round meal with the remainder of the provisions brought from Fez. Absolem

was too ill to cook, so L'Arbi undertook the task, although he had never cooked before. Giving him final instructions to put salt and pepper in the stew, I made a stiff glass of grog for Absolem, tucked him up and made him comfortable for the night. The smell of the grog brought in Mohammed, who had a very bad cough and asked for something to keep him warm. I made the greatest mistake during the journey in giving him the grog that Absolem had left. At last all was quiet and in order. The animals were crunching their chopped straw and oats, Mohammed and the boy were eating their dry bread and fat, Absolem was snoring on the ground, and L'Arbi announced dinner ready.

"Now, my boy," I said, "boil me a little water and I will make some fine gravy for the stew."

I emptied all the Bovril into a small basin of water and mixed it well with the rice and fowl in the saucepan. It smelt delicious. By jingo! how hungry I was—I could hardly wait till he had filled me a steaming bowl of odorous stew. After a few mouthfuls I stopped—it had the most peculiar flavour possible.

"L'Arbi," I said, "whatever have you done

with this? There is something wrong. I can't eat it."

"Oh yes, Guv'nor!" he said. "Look! it is dem good, very good, I eat it—fine. Oh yes! by God, dem good."

But it was no use, I could not eat it.

"Show me what you put in it," I said.

"I put in what you say, Guv'nor," he replied, "dis salt and dis pepper." When I saw "dis pepper" I pushed my bowl of stew aside. It wasn't pepper—it was a tin of *Keating's insect powder*. My dinner that night was dry bread and water.

L'Arbi, Mohammed, and the boy finished the stew and thoroughly enjoyed it.

"We had no guards for the animals, and I had no faith in Mohammed, who was to receive the guard's fee and watch them himself. Sure enough, his snores, in about half an hour, rivalled those of Absolem, so L'Arbi and I set ourselves the task to sit up all night and keep watch on the animals. It was a difficult matter to keep awake ourselves, for since leaving Fez we had not slept much. L'Arbi's eyes would blink and blink at the candles, his head drop, and only a crack with a stick, which I kept handy, prevented him from going off

altogether. At last I hit upon the expedient to keep him awake by getting him to tell me about the great Shereef of Wazzan. It was a most disjointed tale. From time to time his head would fall forward, and a loud snore warned me, for I was half asleep myself. I would hit him a crack with the stick, and he continued his story. It went on something like this :—

“Oh yes, Guv’nor, der Shereef of Wazzan is der holiest ole chap in Morocco. He is holier dan der Sultan. Him no make-believe, him very first of all—him’s great, great, great”—snore—whack! “Well, L’Arbi, go on.” “Him’s great.” “What?” He would rub his eyes and continue. “Him great, great, oh! very much great grandmother was sister to Mahomet, all mans in Morocco do anything for him. By God, he do make many miracles. He went over”—snore—whack!

“Yes, sir, der Shereef he marry one English lady. She live in Tangier with much money—now—Old Shereef is dead and young Shereef no like English women. His mother was Moham-medan, so when der old man die, he sen de English woman with her sons away and she live in big house in Tangier—I have seen—seen—seen”—snore—snore.

The poor boy was too tired, so I let him sleep. How I kept awake I can hardly tell. My eyelids seemed as heavy as lead, and to keep from dropping off to sleep I occasionally jabbed a pin in my arm. At half-past two I could stand it no longer and set to work to wake the others up. Goodness! how they slept! Although I used a thick stick which I augmented with my heavy boots, it was quite a quarter of an hour before they were all on their feet. As the hardest sleeper in the world a Moor takes the first prize.

I was pleased to find Absolom very much recovered and we soon began loading the animals. The effects of the brandy had not left the head of Mohammed and he was in a vile temper. It was with the greatest difficulty I could get him to start so early in the morning. He vented his spite in shouting abuse in the direction of the villagers. This soon brought trouble. In the village they had been waiting for a chance to come and steal something or other, when we should all be asleep. The candle in the tent had kept them away, but when they saw we were packing, out they came and commenced a battle of words with my drunken muleteer. So long as words only were used, I took little heed, and hurried on

to get the animals packed. We were all ready to start, when one man put his hand on the bridle of Mohammed's mule and swore he should not go. In a moment all was confusion. Mohammed hit out and down went the man, but a sharp cry from Mohammed and he shouted he had been stabbed. Quickly I drew my revolver and fired a shot over their heads.

One of my cartridges gone! What next will happen? thought I.

Luckily that was sufficient, and the row ceased; most of the crowd moved off, and the headman came towards me. L'Arbi threatened him with all the horrors of the Sultan's anger for what had occurred. "Get away from here as quickly as you can," the old man said. "Get away, I won't answer for what might happen."

Hastily I bandaged up the wounded arm of Mohammed, and we went off hurriedly in the bright moonlight. For six hours we rode in silence; nobody felt like speaking, for probably we were followed. At last we stopped beside a spring and dismounted for an hour's rest. There was nothing to eat but a small portion of dry bread which Mohammed had begged from a passing villager. Much refreshed, we continued our

journey in better spirits. Still we went very slowly, and I wanted to get to Alkazar that night if possible. This, Mohammed said, he could not do, for both he and the boy were greatly fatigued, and we were only making three miles an hour. The boy lagged behind somewhat, and I proposed to Mohammed that he should mount his animal, thus giving him a rest, and we could get along quicker. He said this was impossible, because the boy was sent to watch that he didn't ride, and he would lose his job if he did so. I promised him four dollars if he would do his best to get to Alkazar that day, as I did not relish another night without sleep. The money tempted him. "If the boy were not here," he said, "I would do so." Then I conspired with L'Arbi to find a way to get rid of the boy. When we got to the village of Shemacha, L'Arbi asked him if he would like to have a rest and stay at the village. The poor lad was so utterly exhausted, that he accepted the proposition with delight. I gave him a peseta to buy himself some food and pay for a night's lodging, and promised to wait at Alkazar for him to catch us up the following day. As soon as we had got out of sight of the village, Mohammed mounted his mule, and we went along at a quicker pace.

Again the country was a succession of uninteresting monotonous hills, and although L'Arbi endeavoured to enliven us with his songs, we were too weary to appreciate them. Seven long weary hours and at last the white minarets of Alkazar lay before us in the valley. Our poor animals were nearly exhausted, and it was really cruelty to urge them on, but we had to reach the city before sundown. Just as the sun sank behind the hills of the west we entered the gates of Alkazar. Riding straight to the Fondak, the animals were put up, and a room hired for L'Arbi and Absolem. Mohammed received his four dollars, and went rejoicing to see his wife and family, who lived in that city. It was only occasionally he had this opportunity to see his family, and said he would have to stay in Alkazar the whole of the next day before starting for Tangier. I went on to the house of the British Vice-Consul, Mr. "Bibi" Carlton. This gentleman was most charming, and treated me with the utmost kindness. What a luxury was a nice warm bath, and how I enjoyed a well-cooked dinner and a bottle of iced-champagne. Seeing I was tired, Mr. Carlton courteously showed me up to my bedroom, and postponed all talk until the morning. It was heavenly to undress and get

between clean sheets. The sun shining through the window on to my face, woke me early in the morning. After a delicious breakfast with my host we adjourned to his beautiful garden to have a chat and a smoke. The first thing I got him to do for me was to send for my muleteer, and order him to start the same day, for I wanted to get to Tangier the following night if possible.

When Mohammed appeared, he put forth all manner of excuses, in order to have a day with his family, but "Bibi " Carlton has considerable influence with the Moors, and he strictly ordered him to be ready at ten o'clock, and get me to Tangier the following day. I also promised him a substantial reward if he succeeded. Then for a couple of hours I sat and smoked in the garden with this most hospitable and remarkable man. Living alone out there with no European—except his 'sister, who kept house for him—speaking Arabic better than English, he carries on a most lucrative business with the natives, by whom he is much feared and respected. He chatted away, telling me many curious tales of his peculiar life, not the least interesting being the history of his negotiations with his friend Raisuli for the release of Kaid Maclean.

At eleven o'clock we started from Alkazar, much against the will of Mohammed. Luckily the boy had not arrived from Shemacha, and I hoped to push on and reach Tangier in a day and a half. Mr. Carlton gave final strict instructions to Mohammed. The route we were to follow would take us through a dangerous country, but it saved a good six hours. We were to put up for the night at a village of Raisuli's men, the headman of which was a friend of Mr. Carlton's, and we would be well received, and a guard sent with us till we were beyond the danger zone.

This village was eight hours' journey, and it was essential to reach it before dark. The animals were fresh, and we were all in good spirits after our rest. Mohammed was still very sullen, and retarded the progress as much as possible. We soon left the ordinary track and were riding through wild rugged country. As the day advanced, and no sign of the village appeared, Mohammed regretted the time he had lost—dawdling along when we started. The sun was sinking, the distance became more obscure, still no signs of the village. Darker and darker it grew, Mohammed anxiously glancing over his shoulder, watching the red glow slowly diminishing behind the dark outline of the rugged hills.

Although we knew the district was peopled with savage hill-men, not a creature did we see. The silence was ominous. The bad reputation that these hills bore seemed untrue—but at a turn in the trek we came across a gruesome object that confirmed all the evil reports we had heard. Leaning against a rock where he had dragged himself, was a dying man in a pool of blood. L'Arbi and I at once dismounted, and I forced a little brandy (which Mr. Carlton had given me) through the clenched teeth of the poor man. But succour had come too late. Even as we held him, the death-rattle was in his throat, and he rolled over sideways in my arms. We left him there, the victim of robbers, who had stabbed him to death for the few coppers he might have on his person.

We rode after Absolem and Mohammed, whose figures were quite dim in the gathering gloom.

I remarked to L'Arbi that Mohammed must have seen the man, and yet he passed straight on, without saying a word.

“Yes, Gov'nor,” replied the boy, “dem bad man Mohammed; all muleteers are the very worst dem bad men in Morocco. Dey pass man dying, and no give one drink. Everybody no likes a muleteer, when one gentlemans go for a long

trek wif a jdem muleteer—he always take big knife and big revolver.”

We caught up the others, and all kept close together ; Mohammed would allow no one to utter a word, and threatened L'Arbi with his knife, when that voluble youth broke the silence with his chatter. It was quite dark now, and anxiously we peered through the darkness for the welcome outline of thatched villages. As we hurried over the uneven ground the rocks took fantastic shapes, and our over-wrought nerves turned clumps of palm scrub into groups of crouching figures. A whispered “ hst ” from Mohammed would keep us all stock still, staring into the blackness, when I would crawl forward to find the guns showing above the crouching men were but the spiky leaves of the scrub palm, moving in the breeze. For more than an hour this kind of thing went on, until the welcome barking of dogs told us we were near the village. As we approached the huts the furious barking brought out some men, who demanded our business at so late an hour. They were by no means polite, and I feared a refusal to put us up for the night, but at the mention of Bibi Carlton's name, the headman was sent for, and we were accorded a right royal welcome.

Through the prickly hedges of cactus we were conducted to the centre of the village. The best room in the place was put at my disposal. In fact, it was the principal room of the house of the headman himself. A cow and a few fowls were taken out to give more room for us. It was quite unnecessary for me now to retain my native costume over my European clothes, and with great relief I took off my d'jellaba. As it was the last night out, I allowed Absolem and L'Arbi a little more liberty.

Willing hands helped to unload the animals and make all snug for a comfortable night. Fowls were killed and were soon in the pot over the fire. Absolem and L'Arbi were in the highest of spirits. To-morrow we would be in Tangier and in the safety of the village they had arranged between themselves to have a good night of it.

I did not interfere, for I certainly was as jubilant as they, but dare not show it. When it became known that we had come from Fez, a crowd soon gathered. Mohammed and the two boys were the centres of admiring groups. Every word they uttered was swallowed by the open-mouthed villagers, who had never been so honoured as to entertain travellers from Fez—the Mecca of the

West. That rogue of a L'Arbi easily outdid the other two with his wonderful lies. To impress upon the natives his own great importance, he manufactured most extraordinary tales about me. The marvellous cures I had made at Court! How I could cure anything under the sun! and *had* done so, and how I had chosen him as my servant because of his most superior intelligence! Little did he dream what would be the consequences of his idle talk.

We sat down to dinner, the room lighted with all the remaining candles. We needed them no more, and L'Arbi had placed about twenty on an old tin pot and stuck others in every conceivable part of the room. Such a sight the villagers had never witnessed. Directly after the repast was finished, as the result of L'Arbi's clatter I had a busy time. Women and children were brought to me with real and imaginary diseases. To have treated them properly, I should have been up all night, and required the experience of a house surgeon at the London Hospital. The two boys enjoyed it immensely, handing round indiscriminately the tabloids from my medicine chest. The climax came when I unwisely commenced distributing a few cough lozenges. Those who could

not find any other complaint to suffer from, commenced coughing and I could not hear myself speak with the awful row, as they forced themselves to cough in every conceivable key. Children coughed, boys coughed, girls coughed, women coughed, and men coughed. They all came in coughing and holding out their hands for cough drops. It was impossible to give to them all, as I had only a few which I required myself. It would not have been policy to have confessed my inability to cure them, but what to do, I was at a loss to know. Before I could stop him, L'Arbi solved the difficulty in a peculiar way. Among my medicines was a tin box containing large capsules of liquid cascara. Each capsule contained two doses. The rogue was dealing those out, three and four at a time, and they were greedily swallowed by the unsuspecting natives as if they were sweetmeats.

This incident, slight as it may appear, made me determine to leave the place as early as possible in the morning. I dared not await the result of my doctoring. At 2.30 in the morning I awoke the headman who slept outside my door, and told him it was imperative for me to start at once. He assured me it was dangerous to travel before daylight, but with the aid of a few extra dollars

he consented to my departure, but he and two of his men would accompany me on my way until the sun rose. We got away from the village at 3.30, three mounted men, with loaded rifles, as escort. It was cold travelling, and for some hours we rode in silence. It seemed to me the "armed escort" was superfluous, and only a trick of the headman to extort more money from me. Soon, I was very thankful for their presence. As we rode on in forced silence, the sound of the gallop of horses could be heard in the distance behind us. We were told to hold in our animals well. Presently two horsemen galloped past us, firing in the air as they went. Well it was that we had obeyed the instructions to hold our animals tight. As the headman explained to me afterwards, this was the method of the lawless inhabitants of that district, to gallop past and fire the guns, causing the animals to stampede and the members of the caravan to be separated. In the confusion and darkness the scattered party are attacked by men waiting behind the rocks.

Luckily we all kept together, and our friends discharged their pieces, to intimate that we were well armed. The marauders hovered round us till daylight appeared, when we saw them disappear

over the brow of the hill. Our escort now left, and we commenced the long tedious ride over the Akbar Hamara (the Red Mountains). Although this was considered to be the most dangerous part of the journey, we were unmolested. Here the beautiful weather we had experienced during our journey deserted us and the rain came down in torrents.

At a turning in the hills we met straggling parties, plodding along in the rain. They became more numerous as we advanced, and ragged armed men were among the crowd. Mohammed's anxiety at seeing this strange stream of people was allayed by his meeting an old friend among the stragglers, who told him they were the advance party from the camp of the Rogui, Bou Hamara, who was just breaking camp a few miles further on. He was on his way to Fez to attack Mulai Hafid. This was interesting news, though rather disquieting. Would we pass through this horde of undisciplined fanatics? Would they, in sport, cut up a N'zerani? Outlaws as they were, they had nothing to fear.

There was no help for us, we could not take another route and must continue our way, wondering if, just at the last, our mangled bodies would lie and rot on the road, almost within sight of

Tangier, as a further proof of the strength of the Rogui.

The rain came down in torrents and prevented me from taking snapshots of the curious and miscellaneous groups of the advanced guard of the Pretender. Ragged camp followers, with pots and pans hanging loosely on their backs, splashed in mud beside heavily laden mules, donkeys, and camels, loaded with all the paraphernalia of a moving camp, here and there a group of prisoners with long rusty chains round neck and ankles, hobbled past. It was all so dirty, and had such a bedraggled appearance—it looked for all the world like a migration of innumerable ragshops.

Portions of the harem would pass, guarded by red-coated, barefooted rascals, with European rifles and rows of long cartridges slung round their waists. The younger girls were invariably attended by older women. Although they were all swathed in wrappings, it was quite an easy matter to distinguish the younger ones. The older women squatted on the mules, passing with impassive indifference; but a pair of dark eyes glistening through the narrow slit of white linen drawn closely across the face, and a turn of the head to have a look at the N'zerani, indicated at once

a young girl. In fact, many would accidentally, as it were, pull aside their veils and disclose a pretty little face. But it was dangerous to loiter, much as Absolem and L'Arbi felt inclined to do so. In fact I felt rather inclined to "linger" myself, and when a rather saucy pair of eyes caught mine, a strap or a stirrup would certainly require arranging and occasioned a halt for a second or two. How the two boys sighed as the shrouded figures passed and Absolem would whisper to me—

"There, Sidi, what a shame. They are all the pretty girls that Bou Hamara (burn his bones) has stolen from the villages. He has a bigger harem than the Sultan, and takes it with him always."

From a slight eminence we saw the whole camp almost at our feet. Mohammed made a slight detour, hoping to pass without observation. We had nearly succeeded in so doing, and I was congratulating myself on the lucky chance, when a horseman galloped up and ordered us to follow him.

Among the stragglers, Mohammed had met many of his friends, and it had become known to the Rogui that a party from Fez were passing.

Through crowds of soldiers dancing round

enormous fires they had made in holes dug in the ground, we passed to a central dilapidated tent. Here we were ordered to dismount and await the commands of the "Sacred Master" inside.

About a quarter of an hour's waiting, and I was taken through the flaps of the tent and stood in the presence of Bou Hamara the Pretender. He was squatted on a mat with his two viziers beside him.

The tent was too dark to see very well, and his face was partially covered with the hood of a dark d'jellaba. In appearance he was not very remarkable, but the small searching eyes that gleamed under bushy eyebrows denoted the real strength of the man, and his long taper fingers were indicative of the legerdemain tricks with which he had gained his reputed Sanctity. Originally a secretary to Mulai Omar, brother of the Sultan, he was implicated in an intrigue and thrown into prison. He made his escape and travelled in Algeria, where he learnt the tricks of legerdemain which enabled him to return to Morocco and perform the miracles that were implicitly believed in by the ignorant Moors. With this new start in life, it was easy

for him to assume the usual *rôle* of Pretender. Since time immemorial there have been "Pretenders" during the reign of every Sultan of Morocco.

His original name, Djilali ben Driss, was forgotten, and he was known only by the surname of Bou Hamara (the patriarch of the She-ass). His acknowledged intention of driving out of Morocco all Infidels soon gained him a considerable gathering. Royal Mahallas were sent to bring him in dead or alive. Some of the Royal armies were totally defeated, and some simply visited a few defenceless villages and cut off the heads of the unoffending peasants. With these glorious spoils of war they returned to the Sultan, and laid their gory symbols of triumph at his feet. Duly pickled by the Jews, these heads were hung over the gate of the Town to mark the fate of the followers of the Rogui.

After all these campaigns against him, here sat this extraordinary man who, with no military talents and a straggling following, had the audacity to march on to Fez. As I stood before him he eyed me curiously, but he evidently had had previous intercourse with Europeans. Here and



HEADS ON THE GATE.

there a French word was mixed with his Arabic. A box was brought for me to sit upon, and the usual customary compliments and greetings followed.

His object in having me brought before him was to ascertain the state of the roads and rivers. It was a most vital point for him at that moment. He questioned me minutely on all points ; although his spies kept him well informed of the events in Fez, my information was quite fresh. He was most polite and kind, and altogether it was a pleasant interview.

With many thanks for my information he wished me "God give me a good journey," and I quitted the would-be Royal presence. We left the Rogui to march on to Fez, and resumed our weary trudge over the hills.

For six hours we rode drenched to the skin, the animals slipping and stumbling over the dangerous ground. Despite our miserable condition, when we saw from the top of a hill the white houses of Tangier away in the distance, we shouted for joy. Once more L'Arbi's songs commenced and only stopped as we lost sight of the city in the dips of the hills. When within half an hour's ride from Tangier, the clouds

dispersed and the sun shone out of the blue sky to welcome us home.

Four travel-stained and bedraggled figures, happy withal, we rode through the streets of Tangier with all eyes upon us. In five days we had made the journey from Fez, and were heartily glad to return once more safe and sound to Tangier and civilization.

APPENDIX

Now that the Morocco question is practically settled, as far as England is concerned, it is unnecessary for me to join with other writers on Morocco and give pages of arguments denouncing English policy and the want of fore-sightedness which characterized her lack of action in the matter. It is no use "crying over spilt milk." England has delivered over the country into the hands of the French, and that is the end of it.

It seems to me that the Ministers responsible for this diplomatic (?) arrangement must have been painfully ignorant of the country they have practically ceded to France.

The few men who know Morocco have incessantly and emphatically protested against such a dangerous proceeding. To quote the greatest authority on the subject—Sir John Drummond Hay said, "Morocco is ticklish ground, and it is here we might be exposed to a movement on the part of France which might prove a severe check to us in our naval preponderance in the Mediterranean. It would never do, that France should hold the Straits, the gut of commerce, the passage to India and the East. It is far more likely to be dangerous than if she held the Canal. As a sentinel of the Straits I fire my gun as a warning, when I know of a move to obtain that object."

No man with common-sense and a map in his hand can fail to see the vital political and strategical importance of the northern seaboard of Morocco, and realize the weight of opinion of this most famous representative at the Court of Morocco.

There is no doubt whatever that the appointment of Lord Kitchener of Khartoum to the newly created office of High Commissioner and Field Marshal Commanding-in-Chief of the Mediterranean, is a striking comment on the realization, now that it is too late, of the great seriousness of the question of another Power dominating, in addition to ourselves, the Straits of Gibraltar, and that the strongest man must be placed in command of the Mediterranean to cope with all or any emergencies that might arise.

The English people have intentionally been kept in ignorance of the richness of Morocco. An eminent engineer, who was sent to investigate the northern portion of the country, told me "he would give all Australia and New Zealand for Morocco." Yet this gentleman, who is of world-wide experience, had only seen a small part of the country. Rich in minerals, with an almost virgin soil, it has a most delightful climate, and is within four days' journey of London.

Comparisons between the Moroccans and the people of other Mohammedan countries cannot be properly made. The example of other Mohammedans cannot be followed by the Moors. The Turks and Persians have for years been in close contact with Western civilization, and become imbued with more enlightened ideas. It is not so in Morocco. The policy to exclude all Europeans and European innovations has been rigorously adhered to by all the Shereefian Sultans, and there is no "open

door" to the interior of the country. The iron feudal system, so jealously retained by the Makhzen, has kept the lower classes in perfect ignorance, and the utter absence of education has prevented even the semblance of a "Young party" as in Turkey and Persia.

Morocco can never bring about her own emancipation, and she must pass under the control of a European Power. Her people are degenerate in every sense of the word, and physically diseased. Without the imported black slaves who brought fresh blood into the country, the Moors would have practically ceased to exist as a nation. As fighting men they are useless. Bombastic display is their criterion for bravery. From what I have seen of them they are a cowardly race, and it is a mistake to bracket them with other brave Arab nations. The only method to make them serviceable would be to train the younger generation as we did with the Egyptians. Let them drill with the European soldiers, to learn first the most important trait for a soldier, viz. discipline.

Many will probably question this statement in view of the fighting at Melilla, but the circumstances of this petty warfare should be fully understood.

Firstly, the Spanish soldiers were not eager to fight for what they considered a "capitalists'" war. The first casualties were the result of insubordination on the part of the Spanish soldiers, and not the result of the bravery and good fighting of the Moors. The object of the war is to protect a railway, now in course of construction a few miles into the country. The Act of Algerciras excludes all idea of conquest on the part of the Spaniards, and the successful result of all the bloodshed can only be the necessity of keeping a large force

of men at great expense to guard a small waterless district.

The tribes carry on a guerilla warfare, never daring a pitched battle, and will always be a source of trouble. The operations of the French in the Showia plainly show that the Moors are utterly incapable of withstanding the superiority of European troops.

If the Moors had a particle of vitality in them, the moment had arrived for them to show it. Their weak Sultan, Abdul Aziz, was deposed, and Mulai Hafid—a much stronger man—on the throne. If the latter had found a nation of “men” to help him, he could have given a great deal of trouble and caused the wavering policy of a great European Power to have helped him to maintain the perfect integrity of his Empire. Then if his subjects had not been the degenerate abject race they are, he could have commenced the reforms he was quite willing to make.

But no!—this country of atrocities, which equal the horrors of the Spanish Inquisition, is only fit to be occupied by a European Power. Events tend to show that France will eventually be that Power. Knowing as I do the richness of the country, I regret that Morocco should not have been—as it easily could have been—English! Or to evade future political squabbles, it should be made a neutral country, after having been purged of its iniquities.

PRINTED BY
WILLIAM CLOWES AND SONS, LIMITED,
LONDON AND BECCLES.

